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TRAGIC DRAMAS FROM HISTORY.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY THOMAS CONSTABLE,

FOR

EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS.

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From the Author

TRAGIC DRAMAS FROM HISTORY

With Legendary and other Poems

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Gratia Musa tibi! nam tu solatia praebes,
Tu requies curae, tu medicina, venis.
OVID.

VOLUME I.

EDINBURGH:
EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS.
1868.

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PREFACE.

It may be proper to state that of the following Dramas the first two appeared in a separate form, in a small volume published anonymously in 1859, under the title of Tragic Dramas from Scottish History.

They, as well as those now published for the first time, were composed in the intervals of relaxation from the duties of a laborious office, at different periods, and at periods, it may be added, long anterior to the date of their respective publication.

One of them, the Tragedy of *Wallace*, in its original form, was published separately in the summer of 1856. The accidental circumstances that led to its publication will be found explained in the notices prefixed to that play, as new-modelled in its present form. When reprinted in 1859, a well-known incident in the life of the Scottish patriot, dramatized in two Acts under the title of *Heselrig*, was prefixed as a sort of introduction to the tragedy. This dramatized episode, so to call it, it has been judged advisable now to omit, as the incident on which it founds, however interesting in itself, and however authentic as a

fact of history, has no direct bearing on the catastrophe of the tragedy, and as it would occupy more space than can be spared within the limits to which it has been resolved to restrict the present publication.

The Miscellaneous Poems that occupy the remaining portion of these volumes, composed at scattered intervals, and principally during the earlier periods of the author's life, were printed, most of them, in 1861, in a small volume, chiefly for private distribution, and they are reprinted with little other alteration than some change in the arrangement of the parts, and the insertion of a few additional pieces now printed for the first time.

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WALLACE:

A Tragedy.

IN FIVE ACTS.

HEU! TANTO PRO CIVE CINIS, PRO FINIBUS URNA EST!
AT VALLÆ IN CUNCTAS ORAS, SPARGUNTUR ET HORAS,
LAUDES—

6

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

ENGLISH.

EDWARD I.,	*King of England.*
AYMER DE VALENCE,	*Earl of Pembroke.*
RALPH DE MONTHERMER,	*Earl of Gloster.*
EARL OF HEREFORD.	
EARL OF LINCOLN.	
WINCHELSEA (or ROBERT OF WINCHELSEA).	[illegible]
ANTHONY BEK,	*Bishop of Durham.*
SIR PETER MALORY,	[illegible]
SIR JOHN SEGRAVE,	[illegible]
SIR GEOFFREY HARTLEDON,	[illegible]
SIR ROBERT DE CLIFFORD.	

SCOTS.

ROBERT BRUCE,	[illegible]
SIR WILLIAM WALLACE,	*Warden of Scotland.*
SIR JOHN DE COMYN,	*Earl of Badenach.*
MALCOLM,	*Earl of Lennox.*
SIR JOHN STEWART,	*Lord Bonkill.*
MACDUFF,	[illegible]
SIR JOHN DE MENTEITH.	
SIR JOHN DE GRÆME, MORAY, LUNDY, LAUDER, BOYD, BLAIR, RICHARTOUN, AUCHINLECK, STEPHEN of Ireland, KERLE, and DAVID WYLIE,	*Friends of Wallace.*
SIR JAMES LINDSAY,	*Friends of Bruce.*
SIR ROGER KIRKPATRICK,	
SIR ROBERT COMYN,	[illegible]
SIR JAMES COMYN,	[illegible]
ABBOT OF CAMBUSKENNETH.	
RALPH HALIBURTON	
JOHN M'AULAY (or SHORT),	[illegible]
GILBERT GRIMSBY (or JOP),	*A Scottish Herald.*
FERGUS,	*An Attendant.*

Citizens, Soldiers, &c.

WOMEN.

MARGARET of France.	[illegible]
JOAN DE VALENCE,	[illegible]
ELSPETH WYLIE,	*Wallace's Nurse.*

Attendant on Lady Comyn.

WALLACE.

THIS Drama owes its publication, though not its composition, to the accident of the movement which took place in Scotland during the summer of 1856, for erecting a monument in honour of Sir William Wallace.

The sudden outburst of enthusiasm for the Scottish patriot, and all that relates to his eventful history, encouraged the Author to hope that the interest, so glowing and so general, then felt throughout Scotland for the subject of his drama, might win 'a listening ear for an assuming song,' and enable him to cast his poet's mite into the treasury, in contribution to an act of national justice, laudable though late.

The work was accordingly printed in haste, on a sudden thought, and hurried through the press a few days before the great meeting at Stirling, on the 24th of June.

That in its construction and in its composition his performance is unworthy of its great theme—and in the hands of Shakespeare, what a theme!—the author is deeply sensible. Would it were worthier! But such as it is, he ventures to lay it reverently as his 'stone on the cairn' of Wallace.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE SECOND EDITION OF WALLACE.

One moderately read in Scottish history cannot fail to be aware that the Author has taken some liberties with chronology in the order of events as represented in the following drama.

He has antedated, for instance, the wardenship of Wallace; the flight of Bruce from England; the battle of Roslin; and the slaughter of Comyn at Dumfries.

For these, and a few suchlike anachronisms, as well as for the version which, for dramatic purposes, he has adopted of one or two other facts that are in dispute, or in suspended acceptance among the writers of Scottish history, he pleads privilege and precedent as his justification. He was constructing a poem, not composing a history.

But a bolder and more questionable license is the part assigned by him to Joan de Valence in the action of the tragedy. For this he considers it right to state he has no warrant from authentic history, nor a hint, even, among the many apocryphal traditions so industriously collected, and recorded with an air of faith so undoubting, and a circumstantiality of detail so picturesquely minute, by the blind minstrel-chronicler in his *Metrical History of Sir William Wallace.*

Of the real Joan de Valence, the sister of Pembroke, and wife of Comyn, little or nothing is known. The Joan de

Valence of the Play is to be regarded and judged of purely as a creation, a Plantagenet of Edward's own stock and stamp, imperious and impetuous, sudden and violent in her passions, whether of love or scorn, of revenge or remorse, under their goadings precipitating the catastrophe, while by assailing Wallace on what in the earlier part of his career is known to have been the weak side of the *Man*, she brings out in stronger relief the depth, sincerity, and single-mindedness of purpose which ennoble the *Patriot*, the incorrupt, uncompromising champion of his country's independence.

ACT I.

Scene First.

SLAMANNAN MOOR—THE ENGLISH ENCAMPMENT.

(KING EDWARD, PEMBROKE, LINCOLN, HEREFORD, BRUCE, BISHOP BEK, *and other Leaders.*)

Edward (*taking Pembroke aside*).
Why, cousin Valence! these are news indeed!
Disunion in their camp! Bonkill and Wallace
At daggers drawn! and Comyn working for us!
Scot though he be, thou think'st then we may trust him—
This brother-in-law of thine?
Pembr. We may and surely.
'Twas he advised Corspatrick where they camp:
'Twas he betrayed their purpose to surprise us,
Enabling us to turn upon themselves
The very stratagem they meant for us.
He feeds their quarrel covertly, and will
Withdraw his followers in their battle's need.
For hostage of his faith he 's sent in pawn
His lady to our camp.

Edward. My cousin Joan,
Thy sister? Ha! Then (*advancing to the other chiefs*) Scotland's mine again!
And what is more than all, the traitor Wallace
Is trapped at last; and for his many treasons,
His raids, his burnings, and his butcheries,
For all the English towns his hands have sacked,
For all the English blood his hand has spilt,
He'll be repaid with royal usury!
And for this land, damned with the primal curse
Of thorns and thistles—fertile in nought but traitors—
'Tis not enough to conquer, I must crush it—
I'll trust no more to Scot or Scotsman's oath:
Stone walls and English steel shall be my sureties.
Away, then, lords of England! to your charge:
Each captain to his post! There are the Scots,—
Let not one traitor of the breed escape you.
Remember and repay the fields of Beg,
Of Stirling, Stanmore, and Blackironside,
The bloody barns of Ayr,—our slaughtered countrymen,
Fenwicke, and Heselrig, and Cressinghame,—
And he, this day, who brings me dead or living
(Proclaim it through the host), the outlaw Wallace,
If he be yeoman, shall rise belted knight,
If knight, an earl. Away! and raise our war-cry,
God and St. George for Edward and for England!

[*Exeunt.*

Scene Second.

FALKIRK MOOR—THE SCOTTISH ENCAMPMENT.

An open Tent.

(WALLACE, BONKILL, COMYN, LENNOX, MACDUFF, DE GRÆME, *and other Leaders.*)

Bonk. Betrayed ! impossible !

Wall. I fear we are.—
This very night I meant to have surprised them
At Temple-liston : for I knew their fleet
From France had anchored yesterday at Leith,
Groaning with wine casks, and I hoped to find them,
Drugged with the Gallic potion, all adoze,
Unready for us. How they found us out
I cannot tell : I fear me we 're betrayed ;
But here 'twere madness to abide them.

Bonk. Why ?

Wall. Because their number more than trebles ours—
Because their archers and their men-at-arms
Are many, ours but few. And on this heath
There is no ground where valour joined to vantage,
Might hope to equalize such fearful odds.

Bonk. What ! wouldst thou then, before our hooting foe,
Full in his sight, these thirty thousand Scots
Should turn their backs and flee without a blow ?
I will not budge, not I ! Art thou afraid ?

Wall. (*smiling.*) Afraid, Bonkill ? why, for myself perchance
Not much : but for my country, yes ! My life
Is mine, and if I rashly peril it,

I peril but mine own : but rashness here
Perils my country—perils many thousands,
Whose life and safety on my conscience lie.
Let us across the Forth.

Bonk. Across the Forth !
That we may fight at Stirling Bridge again ?
Dost think that Edward, like that foolish priest,
Will run into thy mouse-trap ?

Wall. No, Bonkill,
I do not think so. Edward 's too ripe a general
To lend us vantage there, or lose it here.
But on this heath where bush or rock is none
To flank or fence them, can our hasty levies—
Brave though they be—ill-armed and few in number,
Hope to withstand the clouds of English archers,
And mailed horsemen on their barbed steeds ?
Let 's to our ridgy heights, our rocky passes ;
The forests and the floods as heretofore
Will fight for us : and when occasion serves,
We 'll on these Southrons, and take brave revenge.

Bonk. Do as thou wilt : I came to fight, not flee—
My brother's Brandanes, my own Foresters,
Their blood is up : I 've brought them to the ring—
Dance as they may, I will not balk their playing.

Wall. But, Lord Bonkill, ere thou resolve, consider—

Bonk. I have considered : this is my resolve—
Flee those who will, I fight.

Comyn. And I.

Wall. Then you 're resolved that on this very ground
We will abide the foe.

Bonk. That 's our resolve.

Wall. Alas! my Lords, I fear me we shall rue it.—
But we are banded in a holy cause,
And must not risk its marring by dissension.
What little vantage this unsheltered moor
May offer, let us turn it to account.
Bonkill, thou seest yon space of level ground,
In front defended by a deep morass—
Post thou thy Brandanes there :—betwixt each schiltron,
Filling the intervals with Ettrick bowmen.
Meanwhile De Comyn with the horse—

Bonk. But pardon me,—
Thou orderest us as one clad with authority,
Who leads our battle? Who 's our general?

Wall. I am, Bonkill—

Bonk. Thou! thou our general!
And by what right, I pray?

Wall. In Baliol's right,
Our captive king, as Scotland's Lord High Warden.

Bonk. As Scotland's Warden! Who appointed thee?
Is 't of thine own assuming?

Wall. No, Bonkill,
Nor of my seeking.

Bonk. Who conferred it then?

Wall. Scotland's free peers and knights.

Bonk. Assembled where?

Wall. At Forest-kirk,—Baliol has since confirmed it.

Comyn. But Baliol is not free. To Baliol's blood
I am the next of kin, his sister's son,
The rights derived from him, descend to me.

Bonk. The peers and knights of Scotland choose thee Warden!

Where was my brother, Scotland's lord high steward
Where was De Bruce, the high-born lord of Carrick
And Annandale? Where was Sir John de Comyn,
The lord of Cumbernauld and Badenach?
Where was Macduff? Where were an hundred more,
The prime of Scotland's old nobility?
Were they at Forest-kirk?

Wall. Bonkill, they were not.

Bonk. Where were they then? Why had they not a voice?

Were they not cited?

Wall. No, they were not cited.

Bonk. Aha! I thought me so; and wherefore, pray thee?

Wall. Dost ask me where they were, and why not cited?
They were in England part, and part at home,
On Scottish ground snug in their English castles!
They had forsworn allegiance to their country—
On bended knee proclaimed their servitude—
Before their angry God, their blushing country,
They had invoked damnation on their heads,
If e'er they took up arms against King Edward,
Scotland's Lord paramount and lawful king!
O no, they were not at the Forest-kirk—
And why they were not cited, art thou satisfied?

Comyn. Ha! Dost thou taunt us with our forced submission?

Bonk. And darest thou, upstart—dares a yeoman's grandson—

Wall. A yeoman's grandson!
Bonk. Ay! a yeoman's grandson—
A very peasant from his dunghill's hot-bed,
Shot up to rankness, dares he thus insult
The high-born peers of Scotland? Dares he claim
The vaward of her battles? Dares he thus—
Wall. Dares he, Bonkill! I'll tell thee what he dares.
He bears his sovereign's signet: in that right
He leads his sovereign's battles, and to thee,
Proud peer! no, nor to man of woman born,
Save to his king himself, Scotland's liege lord,
Will he that right resign.
Bonk. If thou be general,
Where are thy soldiers? where thy following?
Thou 'dst play the eagle in thy borrowed plumage—
Whose are the feathers wherewith thou wouldst eagle it?
Why yours—and yours—and yours! Claim but your own,
The would-be eagle is a very owl—
The very owl i' the fable!
Wall. No; not so;
Thou 'rt but a lame expounder of thy text,
Nor know'st the true appliance. When the hawk
And royal eagle are abroad at prey,
The owl doth hide him in his castle hole
From danger and from day. But I have met
The English Eagle in his proud career,—
In his mid hour of passage and of pride,
In the full blaze of noon:—Ay, met and mated him,
Where thou and thine, proud lord, durst not be seen.
Who was the owl and who the eagle then?

Bonk. Where I durst not be seen! Upstart and braggart—
Lennox. Lords, lords, I pray you for the love of heaven—
Look to yon hill, whitened with English tents –
Look to yon sky, clouded with English pennons –
Look to yon glittering sea of naked steel,
Soon to be dimmed with the best blood of Scotland,
And bid for very shame your quarrels peace!
As for myself, all rights of rank and place
Abeyed, I'll follow any of the three,
For all I know are brave. But, lords, consider
(The question of the Wardenship apart)
The many claims of Wallace. He has rescued
His native land twice from the tyrant's grasp:
His very name is with the soldiery
A tower of strength, a watchword of success:
Let him but this one day—
Bonk. No, Lord Lennox, no!
Not for one single hour. Thou, if thou wilt,
Follow this king of Kyle; but here I swear,
While Stewart lives, he shall nor king nor warden it.
Lennox. The king of Kyle! for shame, unmannered Lord!
Wall. The jest is stale,—a branded traitor's gall—
A traitor made it, and a fool repeats it.
Comyn. A traitor!
Wall. Ay, a black, proclaimed traitor,
Thy brother-in-law, Corspatric of Dunbar.
Lords, ye have taunted me with lowly birth,
Ambition, arrogance,—I know not what.
All this I could digest, I could despise;
I have a witness in my bosom here

Doth clear me to myself—And to the world,
Behold my voucher on yon tented hill—
England's proud Edward—he can witness for me
A proffered crown could neither bribe nor dazzle me.
'Tis not a point of paltry precedence
I stand upon. Did pride alone gainsay,
I'd yield it readily;
For pride I would—for policy I dare not.
There 's treason in the camp, and treason's dupes—
Bonk. Treason! whom darest thou accuse of treason?
Wall. Not thee, Bonkill; I know thou 'st had thy cue—
I know thy prompter, and thy setter on;
He is the traitor—thou the wretched dupe—
Bonk. A dupe! ha! (*drawing his sword.*)
Wall. Put up thy sword, thou rash mistempered man;
Dost think I fear it? Ere this day be done
Thou 'lt need it all; it will have work enough.
Græme. And work, I ween, there needs no tarrying for.
There sounds the summons to 't.

(*Shouts, trumpets, etc., heard in the distance.*)

(*An Officer rushes in.*)

Off. My lords! away!
The foe is on us.

[*Exit* De Comyn.

Bonk. All who will do battle
This day for Scotland and her liberties,
Away with me!—De Comyn and Macduff—
Macduff. De Comyn 's gone.

Bonk. We will not lag behind him.

Macduff. I 'll go with thee, Bonkill, tho' well I know
This madness hath undone us.

[*Exeunt* BONKILL *and* MACDUFF.

(*Manent* WALLACE, LENNOX, DE GRÆME, MORAY, *etc. They regard each other for some time sadly and in silence.*)

Lennox. How dost thou think of this?

Wall. O Scotland! Scotland!
One glorious day had ransomed thee for ever:—
But treason prospers, and a race of freemen
A foreign tyrant tramples into slaves.

Græme. I cannot think so harshly of these lords.

Wall. Comyn 's a traitor, and Bonkill a madman!
Scotland is lost. If Comyn lead her army,
'Tis sold to Edward; if Bonkill, 'tis slaughtered.
I must not follow them; I will not flee:
From yonder height we may descry their battle.
We cannot bar defeat, but we may lighten it. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Third.

FALKIRK MOOR.

(*Shouts, trumpets, etc., heard, as of a battle. Enter* BONKILL, *with his sword drawn, wounded, and supported by an officer.*)

Off. Alas! my lord, I fear you 're hurt to death.

Bonk. Oh mind not me, but haste thee to Macduff –

Off. Macduff! my lord, alas!—

Bonk. What! has he fallen?
Then to De Comyn with thy utmost speed,
And tell him—but why lookest thou thus? Has he—
Has he too fallen?
Off. Would to God he had!
His recreant heart planted with English arrows,
Even to its rotten core!
Bonk. What has he done?
Off. Even at the first assault, a sword unsoiled
A drop of blood undrawn, the dastard fled
With all his following.
Bonk. With all his following,
Saidst thou?—without a blow! A horrid light
Hath broke on me,—fool, driveller that I was
To be thus foully duped! Oh injured Wallace!
Would Heaven but lend me one day's life to do
Atone to thee, and on that traitor justice!
Off. Oh for one hour of William Wallace now!
Bonk. He must be found. Go tell him of my plight;
Say, with my dying breath I prayed his pardon,
My country's, and my God's; say, I conjured him,
By his own noble heart, by Scotland's safety,
By Comyn's treason, and by Bonkill's madness,
To bury for this day his wrongs, and succour
The noble remnant of those Scots whom I
In my dupe's dotage have consigned to slaughter.
Away! away!
Off. And leave thee here to die!
Bonk. Think not of me; I would not suffer life;
Death is my honour's sanctuary. Thy news

Have braced me for one bloody bout the more.
My gallant Foresters and Brandanes! Stewart
Is with you yet, to lead you to revenge,
And show you how to die! Away! away!

[*Exeunt severally.*

Scene Fourth.

THE SAME—A RISING GROUND NEAR CALLENDAR WOOD.

(WALLACE, LENNOX, DE GRÆME, MORAY, LAUDER, *etc., as looking at an engagement in the distance.*)

Gr. Bravo, stout Brandanes! well-fought Foresters!
God and St. Andrew for the brave blue bonnets!
Another charge! stand fast: look, Wallace, look,
At yonder schiltron showered on by English arrows,
Like snow-drift on a rock! and that, beyond it,
Ringed round and round by walls of living mail—
England's hot chivalry,—see how they stand!
Not Ailsa Rock itself more sternly steadfast!

Wall. But where 's De Comyn? Where 's the cavalry?
How can he leave them to be slaughtered thus!
Our archers are destroyed! Brave though they be,
These schiltrons are not made of stone or iron,
They are not butcher's blocks or armourer's anvils
To be thus hacked and hewed and hammered on.

Gr. Hurrah! the assailants are repulsed.

Wall. Not so,
They 're only out of breath. They but make way
For fresh assailants. There they come by thousands!

But, heaven and earth! what flag is that? Look yonder—
The Lion Ramping on a field of Gold!

Lennox. I know it well—the royal flag of Scotland:
It is the banner of Sir Robert Bruce.

Wall. Of Robert Bruce! shame on the unnat'ral parricide!

Gr. O Wallace! Wallace! look! Alas! my countrymen;
Would I were in the midst of you! They yield;—
They 're broken—slaughtered—flying—followed.

(WALLACE *and* DE GRÆME *regard each other for a moment sadly and in silence.*)

Wall. O traitor Comyn! and hot-headed Stewart!
But 'tis no time to rail. (*Turning to his followers.*)
Ye true-born Scots,
Who still have followed Wallace and his fortunes
In sunshine and in storm;
Who have held fast your freedom and your faith
In bloody fields, through ban and beggary,
Our wrongs must not be dearer than our country;
We must not see our brothers basely butchered
For Bonkill's folly or for Comyn's treason.
Through yonder host we needs must cut our way
To the Torwood. Wo to the traitor Bruce,
And Durham's bloody priest! On to the rescue!
To save our gallant countrymen or perish!

(*They rush out. By and bye, shouts of* A WALLACE! A WALLACE! *are heard.*)

Scene Fifth.

CALLENDAR WOOD—A GLADE NEAR THE NORTH-WESTERN EXTREMITY OF THE WOOD.

(WALLACE, RICCARTOUN, KERLE, *with a few followers. Enter to them* STEPHEN *of Ireland.*)

Wall. Hast thou seen aught of them ?
Steph. The brave Earl Malcolm,
With Moray, Seton, and the other chiefs,
Have led the gallant wreck across the Carron,
And they are safe upon the farther height
Doth overlook the ford.
Wall. Our task is done then,
And we may after them. But where 's De Græme ?
I have not seen him since I turned aside
To stanch the wound the Bruce's falchion dealt me.
Riccart. Just at that moment, 'mid a hill of slain,
He spied the body of Macduff—
Wall. Macduff !
Alas ! the hero of Blackironside !
Riccart. And some ten paces in advance of it,
Walled round with English dead, gory and gashed,
Life scarce extinct, the body of Bonkill—
Wall. O Stewart ! Stewart ! thou hast paid full dear
For all thine errors. Peace be with thy soul,
Thou noble Scot ! thy faults were of the head,
Thine heart was honest, as thine arm was brave.

Riccart. At this De Græme,
Shouting revenge, rushed 'mid the Southron ranks,
Among whose thousands, Lauder and himself
Soon disappeared.

Wall. In evil case, I fear.
On to the rescue !

(*Enter* LAUDER *hurriedly, his sword drawn and bloody.*)

Lauder, where 's De Græme ?

Laud. Where we can yield him nothing but revenge ;
The gallant Græme is slain !

All. Slain !

Laud. Ay, look there ;
His slaughterers are fast upon my traces.

Wall. Oh, I could weep ; but that must be hereafter ;
'Tis now a time for doing.

(*Enter* SIR BRIAN LE JAY, *and a party of English soldiers.*)

Sir Brian. Wallace, render thee ;
Macduff, Bonkill, are slain ; Sir John de Græme—

Wall. Is not yet cold ; and thou, thou traitor templar !
Shalt be a corse before him.

(*Rushes on* SIR BRIAN ; *they fight ;* LE JAY *is slain.*)

O De Græme !
Rescue I may not, but I shall avenge thee.

(*Rushes out after the English soldiers, followed by* RICCARTOUN, LAUDER, KERLE, *and soldiers shouting,* A GRÆME ! A GRÆME ! *etc.*)

Scene Sixth.

EDWARD'S TENT NEAR FALKIRK.

(EDWARD, PEMBROKE, LINCOLN, HEREFORD, BEK, *and other English chiefs at table; one seat unoccupied.*)

Edw. The day has been a bloody but a glorious—
Welcome, my lords, I trow our banquet needs
No costly condiment to relish it:
'Twas bravely earned, enjoy it merrily.
I miss but one: Lord Bishop, where 's thy colleague?
We're much his debtor—Oh, here comes the Bruce.

(*Enter* BRUCE *hastily, as if just returned from battle. After bowing respectfully to* EDWARD, *he sits down in the vacant seat, and begins to eat.* PEMBROKE *whispers something to the other lords, who laugh simultaneously.*)

What moves your mirth, my lords?
Pemb. We laugh to see
De Bruce eat his own blood,—lap Scottish blood—
Bruce. Lap Scottish blood! Wouldst thou insult me, Pembroke?
Pemb. Look at thy bloody hands; they're all unwashed:
Dost not lap Scottish blood at every mouthful?
Br. (*starting up.*) De Valence, dare but to repeat that taunt—
Edw. Nay, prithee, Bruce; De Valence, thou 'rt to blame:
'Tis but a foolish jest. Camps are not courts,
And well may Bruce dispense with ceremony.

His noble deeds, this day, have won him right,
Washed or unwashed to eat at Edward's table,
An honoured and an ever welcome guest.

(BRUCE *bows respectfully to* EDWARD. *Then aside.*)

Eat my own blood ! lap Scottish blood !—too true !

Edw. Our victory is complete. The rebel chiefs
Slain in the action, as this roll informs me,
Are many and of note. But one is wanting,
And he of all the most expected, Wallace.
Know ye aught of the traitor ?

Br. He 's escaped.

Edw. Then lacks our victory its crowning cope.—
But ho, for Stirling ! there we 'll celebrate,
In flowing cups, the glorious fight of Falkirk ;
And be this day—St. Mary Magdalene's—
Remembered in our feasts, and writ a day
Auspicious in our English calendar !

[*Exeunt all but* BRUCE.

Br. Lap Scottish blood ! and do you taunt me thus,
And thus repay me this day's services,
Proud lords of England ? Eat my own blood, said ye ?
And yet, perchance, 'twas but my jealous guilt
That turned an innocent jest to bitterness,
And lent it scornful meaning. But no, no !
What they have charged in sport, I 've done in verity.
That thought, a scorpion's sting plants in my memory
Its wound, envenomed, and immedicable !
How I escaped I know not ; for I fought
With desperate recklessness to quash the thoughts
That ever and anon rose as I viewed

The glorious handful of my countrymen
Melting away before the Southron's steel,
Like their own winter snows upon Ben Nevis,
Before midsummer's sun. Alas, my father!
Thine hostage son has earned thy safety dearly!
I'll take one last look at that fatal field,
Where Scotland's freedom, and where Bruce's honour
Perished together.—But who comes this way?

(*Enter* SIR JAMES LINDSAY.

Ah! Lindsay!

Lind. I have come, my lord, in haste
To seek thee. My good lord of Annandale—

Br. Ha! what of him? Thy face is dressed in sadness;
Surely the tyrant Edward has not dared—

Lind. Thy noble father is beyond the reach
Of tyrants and of tyranny,—he's dead.

Br. Dead! saidst thou, Lindsay? Dead! when died he?

Lind. But three days since.

Br. Three days! only three days!
Oh, would it had been sooner!

Lind. Sooner, my lord?

Br. Ay, sooner! Would he had been in his grave
A year—a month—a week—then had I been
Happy!

Lind. Happy, thy father in his grave!

Br. O Lindsay, think not harshly of my words,
They have a meaning, not a guilty one.
I loved my father, and I do lament him,
As should a loving son an honoured sire.—
But I am sick at heart. Let's to yon field,

Red with the life's blood of our native Scotland :
'Tis a fit place for that which I would learn,
And would impart to thee.

Scene Seventh.

PART OF THE FIELD OF BATTLE BELOW FALKIRK.

(*Enter* WALLACE, LENNOX, LAUDER, RICCARTOUN, KERLE, *etc.*)

Lauder. 'Twas somewhere near this spot.

Riccart. Yonder 's a heap of slain. The gallant Græme
Would not have perished without company.
Alas ! he 's here. There is the fatal opening,
Where, through the faithless harness from behind,
The recreant pierced him.

(WALLACE *rushing forward, throws himself on the body,—covers his face for some time with his hands,—then rises and stands, sorrowfully contemplating the corse.*)

Wall. And is this all that doth remain of thee,
Thou noblest, bravest Scot ! O gallant Græme,
The gentle and the good ! Woe 's me, my brother !
My twin in counsel—my right arm in battle—
My loving rival in the field of fame—
My bright example in the path of honour !
Thou flower of knighthood and true nobleness !
Th' unchanging friend, the honourable foe—
The frankly wise, the mercifully brave !
Thou lover of thy country and her cause,
Without one thought of self ! With thee, to boot,

Wallace had stood for Scotland's liberties
Against the world! But now that thou art gone,
I am but half myself. Pardon me, friends!
There lies the brother of my soul, the friend
That, in my worst of fortunes, ne'er forsook me;
My help and comforter; to whom the Wallace,
Outlaw or Warden, was alike the same!
Though I began the war, with equal arm
He wrought the rescue of our mother-land.
Bear hence his honoured corse. With all the rites
Of love and honour, that the time admits of,
Blair will consign to dust the noblest clay
That Scottish spirit ever tenanted.

(RICCARTOUN, LAUDER, *with some other chiefs, bear off the body,* WALLACE *and* LENNOX *following.*)

Scene Eighth.

ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD OF BATTLE NEAR THE RIGHT BANK OF THE CARRON.

(*Enter* BRUCE *and* LINDSAY.)

Br. Lindsay, my heart is sick. At every step
I tread on slaughtered countrymen, whose eyes,
Though fixed in death, do seem to glare on me,
As on their murderer, whose stiffened lips
Seem curled to scorn as I, their countryman,
Their king and enemy, do pass them by.

I cannot bear it longer: let's away;
The thoughts are working in my guilt-struck soul
Shall one day live in action.

Lind. Hush, my lord!
Look, who are these that march in sad procession,
Bearing a corse?

Br. Belike the followers
Of some brave Scot, slain in this murderous melée.
Ha! well I know them all! There is the Wallace,
There good Earl Malcolm, there Sir Andrew Moray,
Sir Chrystal Seton, Lundy, and Riccartoun,
Sir John de Ramsay, Lauder, Boyd, and others,
The choice of Scotland's sons. Alas! alas!
Why is not Bruce among them? Let's retire
Till they have crossed the stream.

(*They retire.*

(*Enter the procession. It passes across the stage.* WALLACE *and* KERLE *are last. They pause in crossing the stage.*)

Wall. Pardon me, Kerle, that on this busy day
I have forgot to thank thee for thy love;
And for the life I owe thee, when my steed,
Wounded and worn, sunk on the field beneath me,
And left me in my reckless rage alone.
I've lost one friend, my heart doth cling the closer
To those I've left. Oh, many a deed of love
Thou'st done for me! May Heaven reward thee tenfold!
For Wallace never can.

Kerle. Speak not to me of thanks or of reward,
My ever-honoured lord. To see thee safe

Is all the thanks I covet: and my prayer,
When Wallace dies, to perish by his side.

(WALLACE *grasps his hand affectionately. Exeunt. The procession re-appears on the opposite bank of the Carron, at this spot a narrow and rocky stream.* BRUCE *and* LINDSAY *come forward on the side which the procession has left. As* WALLACE *and* KERLE *pass on the opposite bank, following the procession which has disappeared,* BRUCE *hails* WALLACE *across the stream.*)

Bruce. Who goes there?

Wall. A man.

Br. Ay, and a brave one,
As thou hast proved this day. We 've met before—

Wall. We met at Irvine, and—we 've met at Falkirk.

Br. Thou tauntest me: I fear thou deem'st me light.

Wall. This day I found thee heavy. Thou hast left
Thy mark on me.

Br. Wilt thou some brief moments
Vouchsafe me speech? Thou seest I 'm unattended,
Save by a single friend, and he will leave us.

Wall. Pass on, I pray thee, Kerle (*exit* KERLE), and now
Sir Earl.

Br. Lindsay, withdraw a space.

[*Exit* LINDSAY.

(WALLACE *and* BRUCE *approach each other at the narrowest part of the brook.*)

Br. Wallace, I have just crossed that bloody field;—
'Tis a sad sight; it's made my heart to ache.

Wall. And well it may: for mine it 's made to grieve
Almost to bursting,—albeit I 'm no traitor,
Nor carry on my soul the load of parricide.

Br. Thy speech is bitter.

Wall. Bitterer is thy guilt.

Br. When will these wars have end?

Wall. When Scotland 's free,
When thou art honest, and when Edward 's dead.

Br. Why wilt thou shed the blood of gallant men
Upon this desperate quarrel? Take the terms
That Edward offers. Own him the liege lord
Of Scotland, and be under him her king.

Wall. I, king of Scotland! I, king Edward's bondsman!
And this from thee!
Oh thou degenerate and bastard Bruce!
Baliol was weak, but thou art infamous!
Why do I shed the blood of gallant men?—
And doth the devil preach! On yonder bier
(*Pointing to the procession*)
Lies one whose worth to equipoise, thy master
Edward, with all his host of titled slaves,
Were gossamer to gold.
Who shed his blood? From whom doth weeping Scotland
Ask back her noblest son? From Robert Bruce!
Thou renegade! devourer of thine own!
Did I but meet thee in the battle-field—
As soon God send I shall—I swear I 'd liefer
Plunge this Scots whinyard in thy felon breast,
Than in the heart of Turk or Saracen.

Br. Ha! who is he whose blood thus passionately

Thou chargest on me? In the eyes of Wallace,
Who was the first of Scots?

Wall. He was indeed
The first of Scots—of men! Alas, De Græme!
That thou shouldst fall, while Bruce and Comyn live!

Br. Ha! Græme! Sir John de Græme! and has he fallen?
O noble Græme! would I were in thy place,
And thou this day alive! I can no more—
O Wallace! Wallace! I am sick at heart.—
I have been meshed in toils devised in hell,
By holy bonds linked to unholy cause,
An hostage for my father: but at length
That bond is snapped asunder,—freed himself,
Mine honoured father makes his son a freeman!

Wall. Ha! freed himself! what doth thy riddle mean?
Thy noble father, Bruce of Annandale—

Br. Is free; for he is dead—

Wall. Dead! dead! when died he?

Br. I have but learned it not an hour ago:
Would I had learned it ere this fatal day!

(*Covers his eyes with his hands.*

But now at last I draw a freeman's breath,
And feel myself mine own. Before high heaven,
Before these glorious mountains, and thyself,
The blessed bulwarks of my country's freedom,
I swear this sword shall never more be drawn
Against my native land.

Wall. O Bruce! were I assured of thy sincerity—

Br. Of my sincerity! and dost thou dare—
Does mortal man dare to distrust the oath

Of Robert Bruce? Alas! forgive me, Wallace.—
The world and thou have had too fatal cause
To hold me light,—but time will do me justice.
Wall. It shall. I do believe thee! O De Bruce,
This very day, this very hour, abandon
The tents of tyranny, and join thine own.
Br. No, not to-day;
My oath is holy, even tho' plight to one
Who minds no oath himself. It must be kept;
But never more shalt thou, in battle-field,
See Robert Bruce in arms against his own.
And should the tyrant, when my term is out,
Fail his repeated pledge to yield me up
The crown of Scotland on a freeman's brow,
Free to be worn as e'er my fathers wore it—
Then I repeat my oath—
Leader or follower, as my country wills,
To cast my lot with yours, and, till she 's free,
Never to sheathe this sword against her enemies!
Wall. O thou eventful day in Scotland's story,
Ever to be remembered!—
Dark was thy morning, dismal was thy noon,
But glorious is thy setting! Worthy heir
Of princely Huntington, let William Wallace
Be the first Scot to do thee fealty.
Behold, I kneel to thee, who never knelt
To mortal man before. Hail! king of Scotland!
And as to her thou provest true or false,
May Heaven for weal or wo remember thee!
Br. Amen!—and, when I prove a traitor to her,

Do thou, her glorious champion and avenger,
Rip from this bosom, with thy patriot steel,
The foul inhabitant that tenants it.—
But night steals on, and I have much to commune
And counsel with thee, ere I join the tyrant.—
Where shall we meet to-morrow?

Wall. At the chapel
Of Dunipace hard by, at this same hour,
I will attend thee. The good parson Wallace,
Mine uncle, will assure us privacy.

Br. Be 't so; God keep thee till we meet to-morrow.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

Scene First.

TORWOOD.

(*Enter* JOAN DE VALENCE [LADY COMYN], *and a female attendant.*)

Attend. O dearest Lady, I dare go no farther.
This is a fearful place! The gloom of midnight
Broods, even at noon-day, o'er these horrid woods!
The silence and the solitude affright me.
Let us return; what if some savage bandit—
For who but bandits can inhabit here—
Should light upon us!
Lady C. 'Tis my very prayer;
For he would lead us to the man we want.
Att. But what could we, two feeble, helpless women,
Against their violence—
Lady C. Oh, fear not that.—
The bandits of these woods are chivalrous,
And will not harm a woman. With the tongue
Of England, had we English bills or beards,
There were some danger then; but we are safe;
For William Wallace is the Torwood's king,
He and his knights do not make war on women.

Att. But should thy lord hear of this mad adventure?

Lady C. E'en let him. If my purpose speed I care not;
And if it fail, I'll make Sir John de Comyn
My debtor for the service I can render him.

Att. What if thy hate to Wallace—

Lady C. Hate to Wallace!

Att. Dost thou not hate him then? I thought thy love
Was turned to deadly hate.

Lady C. I thought so too,
And acted madly on the faith of it.
When he, with ice-cold courtesy, refused
The love, the hand, that in my passion's fever,
My sex's coyness, and my royal blood,
Forgotten and abased, I tendered to him,
Mistaking rage for hate, I married Comyn,
His deadliest enemy. Selfish and cunning,
A blazoned traitor, a suspected coward,
O how unlike the hero of my dreams,
And of my heart! My scorn for Comyn's baseness
Adds daily fuel to my love for Wallace,—
Till I can hold no more. For this last effort
The time is apt, for I can render Wallace
Service none other can.

Att. Ha! there's a cottage,
Couched like a nest in yonder wilderness
Of birch and briars.

Lady C. 'Tis the place we want—
His nurse's cottage; let us enter it.

[*Exeunt into the cottage.*

Scene Second.

THE SAME. NEAR WALLACE'S OAK.

(*Enter* WALLACE *hastily, followed by* LADY COMYN.)

Lady C. O Wallace, hear me!
Behold me kneel—
Wall. Lady, for shame, arise!
Bethink thee of thy sex, thy blood, thy husband—
Lady C. My husband!—and who is that husband, Wallace?
Thy deadly enemy.
Wall. But he 's thy husband.
Lady C. Thy country's enemy as well as thine!
Did he not play the coward and the traitor
At Falkirk?
Wall. But he fought at Roslin moor
Like a true Scot, bravely and gloriously.
Lady C. Did he not thrust thee from the Wardenship,
That he might seize 't himself?
Wall. My purposes
Were misreported, and I did resign it.
Lady C. He has resigned it too; but not like thee;
He 's made his peace—a golden peace—with Edward.
Wall. Resigned the Regency! it is not possible—
Lady C. And sworn allegiance to the English king,
As the liege lord of Scotland! for the which,
Of Edward's gratitude, one-third of Scotland
Doth own him lord.

Wall. One-third of Scotland, saidst thou?
Lady C. The lands of Ellerslie—
Wall. The lands of Ellerslie!
Lady C. Of Riccartoun, of Lamington, the earldoms
Of Lennox and of Galloway—
Wall. Of Lennox
And Galloway! O the insatiate Judas!
Lady C. Thou art excepted from the amnesty;
A price set on thy head; proclaimed an outlaw—
Wall. That 's but a trifle to the rest—
Lady C. With spies,
With hired assassins, bought with Comyn's gold,
Thou art beset. It was from one of them
I learned the very hour, the very spot,
Where I might find thee.
Wall. For thy husband, lady,
He is my foe, for that he is my country's;
And in the open field, or open council,
With mortal challenge, I would tell him so:—
Other revenge, 'gainst him, I know nor seek not.
As for my life—
Lady C. It hangs upon a breath,
Each moment perils it; thou canst not count on 't,
Not for a single day. My brother Pembroke
Is high in favour with my cousin Edward:
He loves me well:—let me but call thee husband,
Thou 'lt be no more, amid these savage woods,
A hunted outlaw; Pembroke will yield to thee
The regency; say but the word, thine enemy
And mine, De Comyn, is no more—

Wall. O lady, lady! what are Comyn's crimes
To those, in damning dreams, thou dalliest with?
Were William Wallace caught with baits like these,
He were not now a dweller in these woods.
I've told thee, ere to speak with thee was sin,
To woman's love this heart was closed for ever.

Lady C. Think not to dupe me with a tale like that.
Thy bosom closed to woman's love—indeed!
Was it so cold to woman's love at Perth?

Wall. Lady, for shame!

Lady C. Or when thou stolest at the midnight hour
To Ellen Bradfute!—

Wall. In the name of Heaven
I charge thee, peace!—Thou'st named the name of one
Who is a saint in heaven:—nor must thy lips,
Hot with unholy breath, blaspheme her purity.
Thy secret's safe:—but for thine honour's sake,
Thy sex's, and thy blood's, haste thee from hence.
Till thou hast passed the limit of this wood
Thy safety is assured.

[*Exit* WALLACE.

Lady C. O Wallace, hear me!
Thou wilt not:—he is gone:—and I am left
To scorn and to despair—left with the soil
And sting of guilt without the benefit!
Come, deadly hate! deadliest in woman's soul
When thou art born of love,—and with revenge,
The sweetest passion after love, let love,
Soured into gall, possess and quicken me.

[*Exit.*

Scene Third.

CAMBUSKENNETH ABBEY, NEAR STIRLING.—THE CHAPEL.

(*In the background of the Scene, the Abbot at a Table, employed in copying a document. In the foreground,* BRUCE *and* COMYN.)

Comyn. But must thou hence so soon?
Bruce. This very night
I must join Edward ere he cross the border;
For he is jaundiced o'er with jealousies,
And will mistrust me else. My brother Edward
Remains in Scotland:—he has my instructions:—
Carrick and Annandale will rise with him
When we are ripe.
Abbot. (*coming forward*)—
The writings, lords, are ready;
Are ye prepared to seal, and swear to them?
Both. We are.
Abbot. Then, reverently, by yonder holy rood—
(*pointing to the crucifix*)
The blessed symbol of your hopes, ye swear
To faithful keeping of this bond?
Both. We swear.
Abbot. Then vouch it with your seals.
(*They seal. The Abbot then rolls up the two parchments and delivers a copy to each.*)
Br. My good lord Abbot,
We are thy debtors largely:—the meanwhile
Keep this our secret.

Abbot. 'Tis buried here, in as deep sacredness
As in your proper breasts ; and every day
My prayers shall visit heaven, and be importunate
For your success.

Br. Thanks, thanks, kind Abbot, for the present thanks,—
The time may come when we more worthily
May recompense thy love, thanks and farewell.

[*Exit* ABBOT.

My furlough 's brief, I must to horse forthwith.
I need not counsel thee,—for thou art wise,—
To wary walking in these slippery times :—
But, noble Comyn, by that sacred bond,
Now booked in heaven, that seals our brotherhood
Of interest and affection, with a brother's eye,
Watch, I conjure thee, o'er those faithful few,
Lord Lennox, and the rest, who have not crooked
The knee to Edward, and without a home,
Beggared and banished, make their savage lair
Where foxes cub, or eagles build, contesting
With wolves and wild-cats, the dank overlay
Of some foul den. Spread over them the shield
Of thy large influence :—Save them from the blood-hounds
Of thy proud brother-in-law :—Their worth outvalues
All reckoning :—and they are, next to Heaven,
Our main dependence and expectancy.

And William Wallace,—there 's some feud betwixt you,—
It must not be, you must be reconciled.

Comyn. Wallace !—Thou know'st him not :—he is intractable,

Proud, over-bearing, not amenable
To counsel or command.

Br. But he is valiant :
His single arm 's an host :—his very name
Will sanctify our cause i' the general eye,
And win us hearts and hands. Besides, already
He 's privy to my plan—

Com. Ha !—surely, Bruce,
He knows not of our pact this day—

Br. He knows
Only my purpose to reclaim my own :—
And he has sworn to aid me with his sword.

Com. Well, be it so :—and since it pleasures thee,
I will submit me to his proud caprices,
And woo his fellowship.

Br. I thank thee, Comyn.
And now, farewell. When we do meet again,
I trust it shall be on some glorious field,
Where, busked in steel, for Scotland and her cause,
We 'll slip the lion on the leopards' neck,
And gorge him with their blood.

Com. Farewell, De Bruce,
And Heaven preserve thee to achieve thine own.

[*Exit* Bruce.

(Comyn *takes out a letter, which he reads—then walks about thoughtfully.*)

Fortune, I thank thee !—thou hast timed this well—
The throne is vacant :—
My uncle Baliol, and my simple cousins,

Have for themselves renounced it. In my way
Lie two impediments—Wallace and Bruce,—
The sword of Wallace, and the right of Bruce.
For Bruce, his hopes are in this parchment coffined.—
This damning document in Edward's hands,
Will be his death-text, glossed with my commentary
That I but signed it to hoodwink De Bruce,
And serve King Edward's cause. The line of Bruce
Attainted or extinct, I follow next.—
My wife is Edward's cousin. Should all fail,—
Edward is old, and I can wait my time—
The second Edward takes not of the first.—
And as for Wallace——Ah ! (*looking out*) here cometh one
Brings me, I think, good tidings touching him.

[*Exit.*

Scene Fourth.

THE SAME.—OUTSIDE THE ABBEY WALLS.

(COMYN *and* HALIBURTON *meeting.*)

Com. Well, Haliburton, whether hast thou brought me
The carcase or the head ?

Hal. Neither, my lord.

Com. The devil !

Hal. The devil indeed :—he has some devil's charm
For lith and limb,—for they are danger-proof.

Com. Again escaped !—How chanced it ?

Hal. Having tracked him
To his aunt's house, the lady Auchinleck's,

I chose me, from the garrison of Lanark,
Twenty stout horsemen, all well-armed and mounted,
And sped to Gilbank.—But he had been warned,
And fled at our approach to th' Cartlan craigs.
We followed hard, and closed him in a nook
Whence there was no retreat, as he must needs
Have sprung the precipice, or turned upon us.
On one side of this angle stretched a chasm
Of fearful depth,—and full five paces broad :—
He spurred his steed, and cleared it at a bound !
We stood amazed, and durst not follow him :—
And, as we doubled its extremity,
He rushed upon us, and with giant strength,
The foremost two, horsemen and horse together,
He hurled them down the horrible abyss :—
Then, rushing forward some few paces farther,
He cheered his steed, and took the leap himself !

Com. Was he not dashed in pieces ?

Hal. Far below,
In bloody patches on the crags and bushes,
We saw the mangled relics of our comrades,
The birds of prey already over them,
Screaming their horrid carnival.

Com. But Wallace—
But where was Wallace ?

Hal. He had chosen his place,
And lighted on a green projecting knoll,
That hung self-balanced, as it seemed, in air,
Midway the sheer descent.

Com. Was he not hurt then ?

Hal. His horse was killed—but Wallace seemed uninjured;
For on this island crag, showed inaccessible
But to the eagle's wing, he stood and taunted us,—
Vowing, ere Yule, he 'd make us pay right dear
For the good steed we 'd cost him.

Com. Is he still
In Cartlan, know'st thou?

Hal. No: he haunts hard by
I' the Torwood—I know his hiding-place,
And will this time make sure.

Com. I pray thee do—
Remember our agreement. When thou bring'st me
Wallace, alive or dead, the lands of Ellerslie
Are thine for ever.

Hal. Rest thee sure, my lord,
I 'll do my best to serve you. [*Exit* HALIBURTON.

Com. Ay, and to serve thyself. Thou art a villain.
But I have need of thee. The death of Wallace
Removes a stumblingblock waylays me ever,
And binds, to boot, King Edward for my debtor.
Pembroke, my brother-in-law, is angling cunningly
In this same pool—But I will be before him. [*Exit.*

Scene Fifth.

TORWOOD—WALLACE'S OAK.

(*Enter* WALLACE, *who walks about for some time thoughtfully. He starts suddenly, and looks upward.*)

'Tis but the eagle:—I have startled him—
He loves his freedom, and he 's gone to find it

In yonder mountain world. With what a wing
Of fearless majesty he navigates
The vast concavity !—Aye westward, westward,
To the dark Grampians !—What a scene is there !—
A surgy swell of masses multitudinous,
As if the flood, lashed by the equinox
Storming the heavens, had, even in mid swell
Been turned to stone, and fixed in monument !—
O that I had thy wing ! I too would fly
From tyrants and be free, beyond those ramparts,
On whose rough front the finger of th' Eternal
Hath writ—'*Proud spoiler, hither mayst thou come,*
And not beyond.' But ha !——
Was it presentiment the wish I breathed ?
Or thy flight augury, co-citizen bird !
Partak'st with me the populous hostelage
Of this time-hallowed tree ?—Art thou my sentinel,
Warns me at need look to my liberty
With organ jealous and awake as thine !
I think 'tis even so.—Foeman or friend,
Footsteps are near.—Then to my sanctuary,
My forest fortalice not built with hands.——

Conceals himself within the hollow trunk of the great oak.

Enter HALIBURTON.

Heavens, what a noble oak ! old friend, I warrant me
Thou hast stood there ere Fergus owned a crown—
These fifteen hundred years. There 's no mistaking it,
It is my mark. The cottage must be near.

[*Exit into the wood.*

Scene Sixth.

ELSPETH WYLIE'S COTTAGE.

(*Enter from it* HALIBURTON *and* ELSPETH.)

Elsp. The wood is wide, sir.—I'm a poor lone woman :—
I cannot travel far ;—and do not know
Who may be in 't or not.

Hal. Nay, do not fear me.
I know he 's here :—I am the friend of Wallace :—
From good Earl Malcolm I am sent to him,
The bearer of great news. And more in token
That I am in his trust,—I know that Kerle
And Irish Stephen are in hiding with him :—
My name is Haliburton.

Elsp. What !—Ralph Haliburton,
That fought so nobly with Sir William Oliphant
At Stirling siege ?

Hal. The same.

Elsp. Thou must be honest,
For thou art brave.

Hal. I pray thee guide me to him—
There 's for thy pains. (*offering money.*)

Elsp. (*aside.*) A bribe ! ho ! ho ! I guess thine errand now.
I cannot guide thee, for I do not know
If he be here :—But I 'll go call my son.
He knows the Torwood—if within its bounds,
Be sure he 'll find him out. Pray enter here,
While I go seek my boy.

[*Exit* HALIBURTON *into the cottage.*

Scene Seventh.

THE WOOD NEAR THE COTTAGE.

(*Enter* ELSPETH *and* DAVID WYLIE.)

Elsp. A score! saidst thou?—a score of followers?

David W. Of catchpole knaves, armed to the very teeth—

Elsp. O my dear boy, call thy best wits about thee,—
Lead them astray—Give me good time to warn him,
And Wallace time to flee.

David. Content thee, mother—
Leave all to me:—I will so order it,
Wallace may make his choice to fight or flee.

(HALIBURTON *comes forth from the cottage.*)

Elsp. This is my son, sir,
He 's but a simple lad, and no that gleg;
But not a wild cat in the wood knows better
The crooks and caves: and if the man ye want
Be i' the Torwood, Davie will find him out.

[*Exit* ELSPETH.

Hal. Come, my good lad, thou know'st where Wallace is,
Dost not?

Dav. Ay, may-be, whare, or whareabouts.

Hal. (*Blows a whistle gently. His men come forward.*)
Thou 'lt lead us to the place.

Dav. Na.

Hal. Look thee here.
(*holding up a purse.*)

Dav. Is 't gowd or siller?

Hal. It is gold, my boy.

Dav. Then gi'e me it. I'll bring ye near enough,
If so ye binna feared.

Hal. Feared, silly boy!
And twenty of us!

Soldiers. Ha! ha! ha!

Dav. Weel, sirs, laugh an ye like—but in your shoes
I wadna stand!—no, for that muckle purse. (*holding it up.*)

(*Soldiers laugh contemptuously.*)

Hal. Feared, boy, or not, come, lead us to the spot.

(*Exeunt, but immediately re-appear, descending into a rocky dell, environed on every side by precipitous crags covered with underwood.*)

Hal. This is a frightful place—a fit abode
For outlaw or for robber:—how call ye it?

Dav. The *Howlat's Neuk*:—it's no a chancy place:—
I'm glad you're here—I wadna be my lane in't
For a' the lands o' Comyn.

Hal. Wherefore, boy?

Dav. Gude safe us a'!—they say that Fadoun's ghost
Walks here o' nights.

Hal. Fadoun—and who was Fadoun?

Dav. An Irishman—
A devil's bairn had pactioned to sell Wallace
To the Southron folk, somewhere ayont Perth,
And Wallace sned his craig—did he no weel, sir,
To sic a rascal?

Hal. Peace! thy tongue runs restive—
You're sure you know the place?

Dav. Oo yes, brawly—
And that you'll see belive—just follow me.

(*Enters a crevice of the rock and disappears.*)

Hal. Where is he now?—We cannot follow thee—
A fox could hardly enter there:—boy!—Davy!—
Let some one try the passage.

(*Soldiers crowd round the entrance: meanwhile the blast of a bugle is heard as if on the other side.*)

Ha! what is that? [*Exeunt.*

Scene Eighth.

WALLACE'S OAK.

(WALLACE *issues from the tree. Enter hastily, from different points,* KERLE *and* STEPHEN *of Ireland.*)

Ker. There's something in the wind! 't was Davie's note.
Steph. There is, past doubt; and here he comes himself.

(*Enter* DAVID WYLIE *hastily.*)

Wall. What now, my trusty watch?
Dav. Just the old news, sir.
Your hunters are afoot; they 've scented you.—
A score, full armed, for rogue by rogue I counted them.
Wall. So, so; where left 'st thou them?
Dav. I' the *Howlat's Neuk,*
Caged in my rat-trap. Let's upon the traitors;
And when we've thinned them by some half-a-score,
With our good arrows, from the rocks above,
Then sword in hand, into the open space,
And brush them beard to beard.

Wall. My faithful boy,
Thy wit is ever ready, and thy soul
Hath ta'en true knighthood at the touch of heaven.
Thou'st planned it bravely : be our general,
And we will follow thee.

[*Exeunt, following* DAVID WYLIE.

Scene Ninth.

THE HOWLAT'S NEUK.

(HALIBURTON *and his men seen surrounding the mouth of the cave. A soldier issues from it.*)

Sold. I dare not venture farther ; it is endless ;
It branches every way ; 't is dark as hell !
It may be full of men.
Hal. But yet methought
The blast we heard was in the open air,
And on the farther side.
2 *Sold.* We are entrapped.
That boy was knave, not fool ; I thought so ever.
His talk indeed was idiot ; but his eye,
Quick as a hawk's, was full of mind and mischief.
We must retrace our steps.

(DAVID WYLIE *appears on the top of the rocks above them.*)

Dav. Beware of Fadoun's ghost ! he's in that cave ;
There'll be a pair of them ere long—a brace
Of traitor ghosts to dance to the howlat's singing.

Hal. Thou villain! art thou there?
Dav. Another purse
As big as that, and I will show you Wallace.

(WALLACE *now appears on the rocks; and, at other points,* KERLE *and* STEPHEN.

Wall. What! Haliburton! Is it possible?
Can it be thou? Ralph Haliburton,—he
Who fought so gloriously with William Oliphant
In that immortal siege! And hast thou taken
The devil's arles? Hast thou, too, found it easier
To deal with English arrows tipped with steel
Than capped with gold? Edward, I half forgive thee,
When Scotland breeds such sons, who can condemn
Thy hope to round her with the rings of shame?
Hal. Wallace, surrender thee! Thou seest our numbers.
Dav. (*taking aim, and discharging an arrow*)
There's one the less already.
Wall. Well aimed, my noble boy; there's one to match it.
Stephen, well shot! Kerle, thou hast hit thy mark.
Another round like this, and we may close with them,
They'll be but two to each of us. Ah! they have found
The only outlet; let us down on them! [*Exeunt.*

Scene Tenth.

AN OPEN SPACE IN THE WOOD NEAR THE PRECEDING SCENE.

(WALLACE, KERLE, STEPHEN, DAVID WYLIE; HALIBURTON *lying on the ground wounded. The bodies of his followers scattered around.*)

Hal. In mercy kill me!
Wall. Thou deservest no mercy,
And therefore live. Thou art the hangman's due,
A soldier's sword must not be soiled with thee.
Begone and live, if shame will let thee live.

(*Coming away from him.*)

And now, brave friends, 't is time we changed our roost.
Then westward, ho! to our old lair i' the Lennox!
Shift for yourselves: ye know our trysting-place.
Farewell, my faithful boy.
Dav. Nay, I go with thee.
Wall. Dear boy, I must not let thee, tho' I love thee.
Thy two brave brothers perished at my side
On Falkirk moor. I've cost thy mother dear;
I must not leave her childless.
Dav. My brothers died as Scotsmen ought to die—
As 't was their prayer they should. They sleep together
In the Faw-Kirk, close by the gallant Græme:
And every Scot that makes his pilgrimage
To the Græme's grave, droppeth a blessing also,
Balmed in a tear, upon the grassy mound
That monuments their rest. As to my mother,

Her blessing follows or forsakes her child,
As he forsakes or follows William Wallace.

Wall. Well, well, my noble boy. Thy love hath drawn
Rain from a wasted spring. I pity thee,
But cannot say thee nay.
O Scotland! I traduced thee in my haste:
Thy Haliburtons are but monstrous births,
These (*embracing* DAVID WYLIE *and grasping* KERLE'S *hand*)
are thy genuine sons. [*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

Scene First.

BOTHWELL CASTLE, THE RESIDENCE OF SIR AYMER DE VALENCE.

(*Enter* LADY COMYN *and* Sir JOHN MENTEITH.)

Lady C. Nay, fie on thee, Menteith! thou 'dst play the creditor,
And I not yet thy debtor. That thou claimest,
Thou hast not earned.
Ment. Lady, I go to earn it,
And love will lend me wings.
Lady C. Pray Heaven he lend thee
Discretion too, and courage; thou 'lt have need
Or I misdoubt, of both, ere William Wallace
Sings in thy cage a captive.
Ment. Doubt me not,
Can I lack either, when the stake I play for
Is one might fire a hermit, nerve a coward,
And lend a changeling brains—thy lovely self?
Lady C. (*laughing*). Ay, ay, Sir Knight, there is another stake,
A rival mistress, one whose charms outlast
The proof of wear and weather,—on whose feature

Time cannot write a wrinkle or a crowfoot ;
A mistress dowered with princely plenishing
Of mountain, forest, lake, and lowland strath :—
Indeed, Sir Knight, it is a goodly stake,
And worth the playing for.

Ment. Thou speak'st in riddles ;
What mistress dost thou mean ?

Lady C. The bonny lordships
Of Lennox and Menteith.

Ment. Lady, thou wrong'st me—
'Fore Heaven, thou dost. Not all thy brother's gold,
Not the broad earldoms that Edward proffers me,
Nay, not my country's peace—which I prize more—
Whose bane is William Wallace,—not all these
Could gird me to this deed, but for the hope,
The dearer hope beyond. O lady, lady !
For love, the hoard of years, for blighted hopes,
For vows once heard unscorned—for all my youth
Wasted in dreams of heaven, to wake in hell,
Thou owest me usury of reparation.
Oh, thou hast wronged me much !

Lady C. I wronged thee not.
Thou know'st my story all. I was the victim
'f cursed state-craft. Scotland's mightiest peer,
ir John de Comyn, at whose bugle's call
Full sixty belted knights, with all their followers,
Are bound to don their arms, and do his bidding,
Did sue my hand.—King Edward and my brother
Esteemed him worth the bribing. I was the bribe.
My hand they gave,—my heart they could not give him.

Ment. (*kneeling.*) Then lady, by the love, the maddening love,
Hopes nursed in happier years—the burning vows—
Lady C. Rise, rise, I pray thee, in the name of Heaven!—
Thy rashness frightens me; 't will make me rue
Our half-completed bond. Achieve thy promise,
And look for mine,—for such reward as gratitude,
Mingled, it may be,
With other thoughts and old remembrances,
In woman's soul, will not be cold to pay thee—

(*Holds out her hand to him, which he kisses fervently.*)

Now for the work in hand. Thou 'st seen my brother?
Ment. Even now I parted from the noble Pembroke
At Ruglen Kirk; he 's gone to place some troops
At my disposal.
Lady C. Then your plan is ripe?
Ment. Ay; ere another sun hath glassed himself
In the still lake, as, from Benlomond's top,
He bids the world good-night, within the walls
Of grey Dumbarton, Wallace is my prisoner.
Wouldst thou vouchsafe me thy fair presence there,
Thou 'dst see him in his cage; and, if it pleasure thee,
With thy fair finger on the lion's neck
Rivet the chain thyself.
Lady C. Menteith, I own
'T would pleasure me. But peril not our play
By over-confidence. The man thou mell'st with
Hath brains as well as brawn. Thou know'st how oft,

'Gainst odds and opportunities that make
His every day a tale, out-miracling
The deeds of errant knight in minstrel rhyme,
Or devil-quelling saint in ghostly legend,
He 's left his hunters in the lurch, and laughed at them.

Ment. Ay, but he 's laughed his last.

Lady C. So deemed his hunters
At Elcho Park, at Cartlan, and at Torwood,
And yet thou know'st the upshot.

Ment. But this time
He 's meshed beyond redemption or retreat,
Had he the devil to back him.

Lady C. Well, Menteith,
I will not fail thee at Dunbarton Castle
To-morrow eve, were 't but to laugh at thee,
Shouldst thou miscarry.

Ment. If I prosper, lady,
What then?

Lady C. Why, then, the laugh 's with thee,
And thou, I dare to say, wilt not be slack
To use thy vantage, and to claim the forfeit.

Ment. By heaven! I shall not; to secure the which,
I fly on wings of fire. Till then, farewell.

Lady C. Farewell, Menteith.

[*Exit* MENTEITH.

Farewell, thou devil's own,
That dost out-Judas Judas! Out upon thee,
Thou soulless wretch! Thy friend and schoolfellow,
That fought in battle by thy side, and laid
His head on the same pillow after it,

As by a twin-born brother; that same head
That 's worth a kingdom's price, and bears on it
A kingdom's fate, thou to the butcher's knife
Sell'st for a ruffian's hire! And dost thou dare,
Graced with thy hangman's trophies, to insult
Joan de Valence with thy love or lust?
But I have sworn revenge: I 've need of thee.
Wallace has scorned me: and Joan de Valence
Is of a race to love, or to revenge,
By whole, not half. The work I have on hand
Is devil's work, and needs a devil's helping. [*Exit.*

Scene Second.

LONDON—THE PALACE.

(EDWARD, *with the* EARLS OF HEREFORD *and* GLOSTER, BISHOP BEK, *and other lords. He hands them some papers, at which they look, passing them to each other.* EDWARD *rises from his seat and walks about angrily.*)

Edward. How think ye, lords, of that?
Is 't not a nest of vipers,—a foul dunghill,
On whose hot surface, spite of all my weeding,
Crop after crop, of rebels and of traitors,
Springs up to full-grown rankness, without end?
What think'st thou now, Lord Gloster, of thy friend
De Bruce? Is he not every inch a Scot?
Gl. My liege, 'twould seem so, if this document
Be worth the crediting.

Ed. He 'd be, forsooth,
A king, would he! then, by my halidome,
He shall be king, and, at his crowning, have
The hangman for his bishop.

Gl. And that damned double-visaged villain, Comyn,
Shall he not, good my lord, have the like honour,
At the same worthy hand? Of his own showing here,
He 's been a rebel, to whitewash the which
He turns informer. First, the sworn confederate,
Next, the betrayer of the friend did trust
His honour and his oath. There is no crediting
Aught from a wretch like this.—

Ed. But all this, Gloster,
Was for my service.

Gl. Good your Grace, forgive me,
'T was for his own, or I misknow the man.

Bek. But Bruce's treason, good my lord of Gloster,
Doth not rest solely on De Comyn's vouching:—
There 's circumstance to back it. My Lord Pembroke
Writes here of gatherings in the west: that Wallace,
Lord Lennox, Moray, and Sir Simon Fraser,
Have left their hiding-place: that Edward Bruce
Is mustering Annandale: and that 'tis bruited,
And of most general credit through the land,
That Robert Bruce hath set a tryste with them,
Naming the place, the very day, whereon
To give them meeting, and to take on him
The style and state of Scotland's sovereignty.

[*Enter a Servant.*

Serv. My lord the king,

Two messengers from Scotland, and in haste,
From th' Earl of Pembroke and the Lord of Badenach.

(*Gives two sealed packets into the king's hands, and exit.*),

Ed. Ha! here's a dish of comfort, lords. De Valence
Doth here inform me the arch-traitor Wallace
Hath fallen into his trap, and, ere this reaches me,
Will be fast prisoner in Dumbarton Castle;
For certainty whereof, he and Menteith
Do both impledge their heads. And here, moreover,
From the Lord Badenach I learn, his cousin,
Sir James de Comyn's on his journey hither,
Bringing th' indenture, with the hand and seal
Of Bruce himself, to certify the treason
Whereof he doth impeach him. Good my Lord
Of Gloster, call me Sir John Segrave hither,
T' attach the traitor's person: then attend me
To the council-hall: this is a business
May not be dallied with. Follow me, lords.

[*Exeunt all but* GLOSTER.

Gl. Ah, my poor friend! thy neck is in the noose,
And he that holds it hath a hangman's grip!
There is no mercy, nor no mother's milk,
In that fell bosom; and the man would snatch
The purposed victim from his lynx's eye,
And tiger clutch,
Must deal in magic or in miracles.
Is there no way to save him? For, Heaven sain me!
I read no treason in 't, but wish his cause,
With all my soul, God-speed. Were I a Scot,

I'd do what Bruce doth. On my native soil
Of merry England, were a foreign foot
To trample it, or dared a foreign tyrant
Wreathe round the free-born necks of Englishmen,
His despot's iron collar, as in Scotland
It hath been done by Edward, then, by Heaven!
Keep he aback who should, Ralph de Monthermer
Would risk his neck, ay, every hour o' the day,
And every day o' the year, to work their riddance,
And do his country right. Is there no way?

(*Pondering.*)

Ha! Bruce is quick of wit, ready and capable,
I 've heard him construe riddles for the nonce,
Would give old Œdipus himself the megrims.

(*Looking at his spurred heel.*)

By Heaven, the very thing! I have it here:
I must not lose a moment.

[*Exit hastily.*

Scene Third.

BRUCE'S LODGINGS.

(*Enter* BRUCE, LINDSAY, *and a* SERVANT; BRUCE *holding in his hand a pair of gilt spurs and a purse of gold.*)

Br. And from my noble friend,
Ralph de Monthermer,* Earl of Gloster, saidst thou?

---

* Ralph de Monthermer married Joan of Acres, widow of Gilbert de Clare Earl of Gloster, and was permitted to use the title of Gloster during

Serv. Even so, my lord.

Br. What did he charge thee farther?

Serv. He bade me speed to thee, and with such haste
As life or death were in't: be sure to find thee,—
Commend him to thee, and, with hearty thanks,
Return the loan that he had borrow'd of thee,
Whereof thy need, as thou didst notice him,
Is of most pressing and immediate urgency.

Br. And said he nought besides?

Serv. No, my good lord, save earnest repetition
To prove my speed, and bring him back assurance
That I had spoke thyself.

Br. Where is Lord Gloster?

Serv. At council with the king,—wherefrom, in haste
He did come forth, much—as it seemed to me—
Disturbed in mood—and having lessoned me,
Returned forthwith.

Br. Bear to the noble Gloster
My humble service and my hearty thanks.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

Ha! Lindsay, there's a mystery in this,
More than the seeming bears,—
What can Monthermer mean?

Lind. And doth he mean, then,
More than his message bore? Did you not send
To crave repayment of the loan?

---

the minority of his stepson, who was the king's ward. This stepson (Gilbert de Clare) was slain in the battle of Bannockburn, to the great regret of Bruce, who, as Barbour asserts, was his kinsman—sib to him—and who caused his remains to be buried with special honours at Stirling.

Br. No, Lindsay:
I never lent Monthermer spurs or gold,
Nor is he given to jesting. With the king
At council, and disturbed! So said his messenger.
Now, all the saints forfend, they should have seized
The herald Grimsby on his way to Scotland,
And found my letters on him!

Lind. Letters, my lord!
For whom?

Br. For Wallace and my brother Edward.
There 's hanging matter in these letters, Lindsay,
Should Edward light on them. I hope he has not;
But there is danger, whatsoe'er the cause.
Monthermer is my friend; his double gift
Doth token danger, and necessity
For instant flight, and far. We must to horse,—
Off to the north! Our neck 's in jeopardy,
Till we have placed the Cheviot and the Tweed
Betwixt us and the hangman. Haste thee, saddle us
Our two best steeds, the fleetest and the strongest!
Our life 's upon the wheel, and doth depend
Even on a single turn. At the back postern
Abide me: I 'll be with thee instantly. [*Exit* LINDSAY.
Ho! who waits there?

(*Enter* SERVANT.)

I 'm to my cabinet
With Sir James Lindsay, and on urgent business,
Let none disturb us—on thy peril see to 't—
Of what degree soever till I call thee. [*Exit.*

Serv. I 'll see to it, my lord.

[*Exit.*

Scene Fourth.

SCENE CHANGES TO SCOTLAND—THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF GLASGOW.

(*Enter* WALLACE *and* MENTEITH.

Ment. Ha! ha! ha! ha! Nay, Wallace, pardon me,
I cannot choose but laugh! It is, i' faith,
A right good homily. Old Sinclair's self,
The Bishop of Dunkeld, might grudge thy gift;
I 've heard a worse from him. Thou 'rt grown fantastical:
Thy brain 's abreed with maggots. Thou 'lt turn visioner,
Or don the monk's hood, if this humour lasts.

Wall. No, no, Menteith; I'm not i' the beadsman's vein,
Nor is 't the mood o' the moment.
Thou wouldst not have me what the Southron dames
Do picture me, to hush their squalling brats,
And fright them from the crying,—a fierce Ogre,
Who every morning laves his hands with blood,
And then goes forth to slay men for his pastime!
I am in truth aweary of the life
That evil times, and an enforced necessity,
Have yoked me to. I 've been too long, Menteith,
A man of blood, and I have need of leisure
For self-communion, and a shriving-time
To even accounts with Heaven.

Ment. O worse and worse!
Did I not guess aright? shall I bespeak thee
A cowl and cell in bonny Inchmahome?

Wall. In Inchmahome! Ah! dost thou mind, Menteith,
The happy hours we spent not far from it,
Where thine own castle, on its island nest,
Doth crown the centre of the lone Loch Rusky?
Were not those happy times? We had not then on us
The taint of blood,—save of the glutton ged,
The tyrant of the lake; or the fleet roebuck,
That many a weary mile, o'er moss and moor,
Led us by Lubnaig lake, or up the steep
Of dark Benledi. O for that life again!

Ment. What! not a word of thine old paradise,
Whereof thou gav'st me keeping? There too, Wallace,
We have been merry, have we not?

Wall. Ay, old Dumbarton! I do love thee well.
Oft on thy peak, smitten by sun and storm,
Bushless and bleached, scarred with the dint of centuries,
Down the unscaleable and fissured steep,
I've gazed agiddy, watching the Atlantic,
That from far western worlds, yet unexplored
And nameless, did his murmured worshipping—
For so did fancy deem—as he did bathe
The blessed rock that gave Ierne's saint,
The holy Patrick, birth. From the 'yond shore
Meanwhile of Clyde, fringed with its balmy birchwoods,
Touched by the breath of May, the gentle south
Came kissingly across, dispensing health,
Dispensing fragrance! These were hours, indeed!
Sweetly they sped, and left no heartsore after them,—
When shall we lead that happy life again?

Ment. Sooner, mayhap, than thou dost reckon of.

But tell me, Wallace, how dost like my nephew?
I hope thou find'st him apt and serviceable?

Wall. Oh! 't is a youth of promise; shrewd of wit:
I thank thee for him. In my present shifts
He is a treasure to me.

Ment. I 'm glad thou find'st him so. Whate'er his wit,
I certify his will. When thou hast need
For secrecy and trustworth messenger,
He 'll pass betwixt us: thou may'st unbosom to him
As to myself. I pray thee, send him to me
With thy first news of Bruce.

Wall. Be sure I fail not.

Ment. Where dost thou roost to-night?

Wall. That is a secret
I tell to very few: but thou art of them:
And therefore know my hostel for this night
Is even hard by; my castle is a barn.

Ment. O then, I guess the place;—Robroyston barn,
Is 't not?

Wall. Even so.

Ment. And how art thou attended?

Wall. Save honest Kerle, and thine own trusty nephew,
I have none other company.

Ment. Ha! where 's
Stephen of Ireland, and that pearl of pages,
Thy little Davy?

Wall. Stephen 's to the south,
For tidings of De Bruce: and, as for Davy,
He 's my intelligencer. He has eyes,

Ears, and a wit to use them. He 's abroad
To gather news.

Ment. Well, for a life so precious,
Thou art but poorly guarded : and so near, too,
The tiger's deadliest lair ; so near the strongholds
Of stern De Clifford, and of subtle Valence !

Wall. 'T is that makes safety in the smallest number.
Thou know'st I 've set a tryste with Bruce, to meet him
Upon midsummer night, on the Borough-moor :
I must not be far off.

Ment. And Heaven itself,
For Scotland's sake, will guard thee, and rain down
Shame and confusion on thine enemies.
But fare-thee-well ! I must with haste to Glasgow,
Ere the night fall. Be sure to give me warning
When Bruce arrives.

Wall. Oh, trust to me, Menteith.
I 've many friends, and thou art of the chiefest.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene Fifth.

NEAR THE SAME.

(*Enter* MENTEITH *and* JOHN SHORT M'AULAY.)

Ment. Thou understandest me. Give not the signal
Till they be sure asleep.

M'Aulay. I am their butler,
They 'll sleep the sooner, and they 'll sleep the sounder.

Ment. And mind their weapons well.

M'A. I 'm school'd enough;
And should I blunder it, I put this head,
And all that 's in 't, in pawn.

Ment. Bestir thee, boy.
When I am Earl of Lennox and Menteith,
Thou wilt not lack thy wage.

M'A. Uncle, I 've that
Which pricks me on without; my brother's blood
Is on his sword; my wage is my revenge.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Scene Sixth.

A WOOD NEAR THE SCOTTISH BORDER.

(*Enter* BRUCE *and* LINDSAY *covered with dust, and as if just dismounted after a long journey.*)

Br. Ugh! by St. Kentigern! but all my bones
Are on the ache. We 've done a feat to-day
To brag on, Lindsay, o'er the blazing billet,
When beards do wag at Yule. We 've rode the brooze—

Lind. And won it too, I hope.

Br. I hope so too;
Though it has made us chase the flying crow
O'er ditch and dyke, o'er mountain and o'er hollow,
Like mad moss-troopers in a border foray.
Our gallant steeds have need of breathing space,
And bravely they have earned it. Here 's a spot

That wooes us temptingly. There 's for our horses
Herbage and running stream; and for their masters,
Shade, and a sward of velvet. Let us rest us.

(*They sit down.*

Lindsay, for this long hour I have been musing
On what thou 'st said of Comyn. By St. Paladie!
I think thou judgest hardly of him; though
I own thou 'st shook my faith somewhat.

Lind. My lord,
I have spoke freely, of my love to you,
What long time I have thought. The grounds I stated
Are strong in circumstance; they are no more;
Thou must not reck of them but as hereafter
Thine own observance, and De Comyn's acts,
May give the comment.

Br. I will watch him, Lindsay,
And that right narrowly. They have in Badenach,
Comyn's own country, in the native tongue,
A rhyming rede familiar as a proverb,
Phrases no flattery of the Comyn race.

Lind. How runs it?

Br. In my rendering it runs thus:—
While there doth grow green tree in wood,
There will be guile in Comyn's blood.

Lind. God grant, my lord, it be not prophecy,
And of your finding true.

Br. Ha! Lindsay, look;
What men be these? They seek to shun us, seeming
As if they knew, and yet would fain avoid us.
By all the saints! the cousin and the doer

Of the Lord Badenach's self! Sir James de Comyn;
And posting south the Tweed! Some mystery 's here
It boots us to unravel. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Seventh.

A GLADE IN THE SAME WOOD.

(*Enter* Sir JAMES COMYN, *and* BRUCE *following him.*)

Sir J. C. Nay, good my lord, there 's nothing in the packet
That aught importeth thee.
Br. How knowest thou that?
Lord Badenach 's my friend, conjunct and sworn;
He hath no secrets from me. In that packet
There may be matter that shall cause me turn
My steps a-south, and save me farther travel.
I prithee give it me.
Sir J. C. I have it not.
Br. I saw thee have it, scant a minute past.
Sir J. C. My fellow hath it; he hath gone before
To the hostelry. We are on speed, and lack
Fresh horses for our journey.

(*Enter* FERGUS, *his sword drawn, followed by* LINDSAY, *with his sword also drawn.*)

Fergus! ha!
What means this broil?
Ferg. This gentleman, perforce,

Would rob me of the packet I 've in charge,
And I did make resistance.

Sir J. C. Thou didst well.

Br. Sirrah, surrender it!

Sir J. C. Lord Carrick, pardon me?
'T is trusted to my charge; I may not yield it,
Nor shall, but with my life.

Br. Then shalt thou yield it,
Even with thy life. The time 's too pressing, sir,
To be bestowed on parley. Thou didst know me—
Didst know me as his friend, secret and sworn,
On whose affairs thou hast confessed to me
Thou now art journeying; yet wouldst thou shun me;
And being barred thyself, wouldst speed thy varlet
Upon his stealthy flight;—I have some cause
To doubt De Comyn's faith. Thy conduct now
Arms doubt with circumstance. I 'll be resolved.
The packet or thy life!

Sir J. C. Neither, De Bruce. (*Drawing his sword.*)
Fergus, stand fast! We cannot bring our chief
Offering more welcome than his en'my's head.

Br. His en'my's head! Then, Lindsay, he 's the villain
Thou held'st him for. Now, traitors, for your life!

[*Exeunt fighting.*

Scene Eighth.

ANOTHER GLADE IN THE SAME WOOD.

(*Enter* BRUCE *and* LINDSAY, *their swords bloody ;* BRUCE *reading an open packet.*)

Br. Look, Lindsay, look ! the very deed we sealed,
And swore to secret keeping at Cambs'kenneth !
And there the traitor's letter to King Edward,
Wherein he speaks of former messages,
And new repeats his earnest counselling
To have me taken off. This man-sworn wretch !
Lindsay, thou 'st read him right. To horse ! to horse !
Mettle and muscle they must furnish yet,
Till they have borne us to the fox's den.
He 's at Dumfries : so shows this tell-tale missive ;
There shall we find and dole him his deserts.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

Scene First.

ROBROYSTON BARN IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF GLASGOW—TIME, NIGHT.

(WALLACE, *walking about in the interior of the barn, agitated.*)

Wall. Away ! away ! it is but mockery.—
The sense did play me false. I 've heard of such things—
Of shapes seen dancing in the airy void,
And grinning spectres, when the blood 's a-fever.
'Twas but a fire-flaught, that the fretted nerve
Struck from a feverish brain, and fancy's fooling
Did shape to semblance of a thing that was.
Ha ! there again ! This is no mockery,
No cozening of the sense. It glares on me,
Even as I saw 't at Gask, distinct and horrible.
O thou mysterious, intangible terror,
That tak'st the only shape I may not look
With unblenched cheek upon ! hadst thou but aught
Doth kin with flesh and blood, I 'd question thee,
And force confession with this argument :—
(*Waving his sword.*)
But as thou art, by Him that thou and I
Must answer to, I do adjure thee, Fadoun,

Or whatsoe'er thou be, that dost inherit
The form was his,—why thus a second time,
Dost thou, an ominous unearthly guest,
Steal on my noon of night? Speak, I adjure thee.
Thou smilest, but speakest not; and in thy smile
There is a sneer, a cold, malignant joy
Shoots, like an ice-bolt through me. Ha! evanished!
Where but the levin's flash could perviate,
Nor left thy mark of passage! No! by heaven!
This is no phantasy; nor can it be
Foresign of good; twice hath it come to me.—
Oh! that man's blood sits heavy on my soul;
I fear I did it rashly.[1]

(*Enter* KERLE.)

Kerle. Methought I heard thee speak. Thy cheek is colourless—
Thou lookest a-wild—thine eye has terror in 't,
As one new wakened from a horrid dream,
And yet not all himself.

Wall. It was no dream.

Kerle. What was no dream?

Wall. Kerle, I did see him there—
On my soul's hope I did.

Kerle. Whom didst thou see?

Wall. Fadoun.

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[1] Another ghostly visitation of this kind is recorded in Scottish history—that of the Bastard of Arran (Sir James Hamilton), who had been put to death by his orders, to King James the Fifth, at his palace of Linlithgow, April 1546, and which had been interpreted, truly, if we may judge by the event, as ominous of his approaching end.—*Vide* Miss Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 392.

Kerle. Impossible. Thou wert asleep,
And thou didst dream of him.

Wall. I was awake—
I am not more so now. I had just stretched me
On yonder bench of oak,—my mind a-busy
With its own communings, when suddenly
He stood before me, on that very spot
Where thou stand'st now.

Kerle. Thou wert a-doze, half sleeping and half waking,
Dreaming of Fadoun, and the shape thou sawest
Was but the flashing of thine heated eye,
Opening a-sudden on the dark, that startled thee,
Betwixt asleep and wake.

Wall. I saw him, Kerle,
With every faculty of soul and sense,
In as true action as thine own are now,
Most horribly distinct. His ghastly head,
Streaming with blood, showed his ill-favoured features
In their death-throe, as vivid to the sense
As when I severed it in Methven wood,
In my too hasty rage.

Kerle. He was a traitor,
And dree'd but his deserts. Thy life, the lives
Of all, were with thee then, were i' the balance
In mortal poise 'gainst his,—and made his death
An act of guiltless and enforced necessity.

Wall. He was the only man that e'er I slew,
Except in battle and upon defence.

Kerle. My lord, thy late fatigues, thy much unrest,
And thoughts too needless nice touching that traitor,

Have worked together to unseat thy health,
And thou dost need repose.

(JOHN SHORT M'AULAY *enters.*)

Come hither, boy,
Hast in thy flagon aught may medicine
My lord to a sound sleep?

M'A. Ay: a medicine
Will not enforce a wry face in the swallowing.

(*Goes out and returns with a large silver cup, which he hands to* WALLACE.)

Wall. What! Bordeaux?

M'A. Ay, sir, of mine uncle's sending,
From his own cellar at Dumbarton Castle:
He did commend it much.

Wall. It must be good, then:
Sir John Menteith is wise in vintages,
And nice withal: and though his heart be Scots,
He hath a Southron's palate. Here, my boy,
Here 's to thine uncle and thyself, a health
From one is largely debtor to you both,
And hath none other coin to pay withal,
But thanks and hearty love. Here, pledge me, Kerle.

Kerle. Nay, pardon me; 't will make me fall on sleep.

M'A. Oh, mind not that, good Kerle: I watch to-night,
And will not touch the cup.

Kerle. Nay, 'tis my watch, boy.

M'A. Nay, nay, good Kerle: since Stephen went away,
Thou 'st more than watched thy turn. I fear thou ratest
My wit or carefulness at small account.

Kerle. Neither, my boy. Thy wit doth pass thy years,
Thy faith thy wit. But we 're amid the breakers :
The rocks are rife and treacherous around us :
Danger doth thrive in darkness, and doth need
Keen-eyed experience for his opposite.
When thou hast served apprenticing like mine,
Thou 'lt prove the better sentinel, I doubt not.

Wall. Nay, Kerle, he 's in the right on 't. Thou of late
Hast overtasked thy strength. Give him his wish—
I 'll be his voucher. And, besides, to-night
I 'd have thee by me, for my soul is heavy,
I am not well in mind.

Kerle. Well, be it so.
(*Takes the cup and drinks.*)
Young cock, be sure that thou do crow betimes,
Should there come footsteps near.

M'A. Oh, fear me not :
I will enforce confession from thyself,
That a young eye can see as far i' the dark,
And a young ear can hear as far-off footfall
As e'er an old one.

Kerle. God grant it be so !
But keep a good look-out.

(WALLACE *and* KERLE *compose themselves to sleep*—WALLACE *on an oaken bench or settle ;* KERLE *on the ground, somewhat nearer the door.* M'AULAY *goes out, but in a short time returns, at first cautiously opening the door and listening, then approaching gently on tiptoe, first to* KERLE, *then to* WALLACE.)

M'A. My seasoned cup hath done his duty bravely;
They 're on the snore already. Time is now
My signal were alight.

(*Exit, but immediately returns and cautiously removes his bugl from around* WALLACE'S *neck, then his sword, dagger bow and arrows; in like manner removes* KERLE'S *arms goes to a narrow slip or aperture in the wall of the barn, and hands them to some one without. He then uncloses the door of the building and goes out, but immediately returns conducting a band of English soldiers, who station themselves near the doorway. Their leader—to* M'AULAY, *whom he accompanies to the bottom of the stage,*)

Our orders are express. Lord Pembroke charged us
To take them both alive.
M'A. Then I do prophesy,
When they are ta'en alive, there will be few of you
Alive to boast the deed.
Off. What! and but two of them.
Unharnessed and asleep! that were a feat
To brag on, truly!
M'A. Nay, the two, I promise you,
Will ne'er be ta'en alive. Your game is Wallace:
And to make sure of him, quiet his chamberlain—
He 's not of mark sufficient to be made
A raree-show to stare at: yet you 'll find
He 's not a pleasant play-fellow to tilt with,
Should he awake: and to forfend the which
I 'll give his sleep the rivet.

(*Stabs* KERLE; *at the same time making a signal to the soldiers, who rush two of them on* KERLE, *the rest on* WALLACE.)

And now, Wallace,
The Philistines be on thee!

Kerle (*starting up*). Wallace! Wallace!

Villains, unclutch me; ha! no sword; I'm slain.

M'A. (*to the soldiers.*) Away with him!

Kerle (*faintly, as he is hurried off*). Wallace! awake, awake!

Wall. (*who has started up at the first cry of* KERLE).

Whose cry was that? Was it thy voice, M'Aulay?
Ha! are ye here? (*shaking off his assailants*) unwarned, unweaponed, too!
Where art thou, Kerle? Thy sword,—thy sword,—I pray thee;
Thy dagger, anything;—not even my bugle left me!
Then there is treachery in 't. But it is not
The harness makes the soldier—

(*Tearing off a large portion of the bench on which he had been lying.*)

With a worse
I've done a darg ere now.

(*Rushes on the soldiers, who gradually retreat, till at length they are driven out of the apartment, fastening, however, the door after them, and leaving* WALLACE *alone within.*)

But where is Kerle?
Methought I heard his voice Was it a dream?
Or is he slain indeed? Ha! some one calls me.

Ment. (*Outside the slit or aperture in the wall of the barn.*)
Wallace, Wallace!
Wall. (*going up to the place*) Is 't thou my faithful friend? then God be praised,
Thou art not slain.
Ment. It is thy faithful friend.
Wall. Ha! 't is not Kerle: but, or mine ear deceived me,
It is Menteith.
Ment. Wallace, it is thy friend.
Wall. Hand me, I pray, thy sword. I am beset,
Nor have not inch of steel; lend me thy whinyard,
I 'll be anon by thee.
Ment. Alas, my friend!
It is impossible.
Wall. Art thou, too, weaponless?
Ment. No; but—
Wall. Then 't is no time for buts; I pray thee,
What weapon thou hast on.—
Ment. —And be thy murderer!
Nay, Wallace, pardon me; I did come hither
To save thy life, not to abet thy murder.
There's no escape for thee: thou art enclosed
By hopeless numbers, and the brand 's alight
Already on the thatch, that with a breath,
A nod, a single glance, in one broad blaze
Shall wrap thyself and thy frail fortalice.
I pray thee thy consent, that I may make
Conditions for thy life.
Wall. What! with the Southron!

Never, Menteith. They will not mind conditions,
Nor will I tender them.

Ment. Nay then, kind Kerle,
And my poor nephew, Heaven have mercy on you!

Wall. Ha! do they live, then?

Ment. Only while I bring
De Clifford thy resolve. Let me, I pray thee,
For a brief space, have private parley with thee.

[*Exit.*

Wall. (*alone*). As for my life, were that the only question.
'Twere easy of resolving; but my friends,
My faithful friends! Kerle once did save my life;
And shall I, for a proud punctilio,
Throw his away? Or shall I rob my friend
Of the brave youth his love did loan me with?
It were most base requiting! (*Enter* MENTEITH.)
Well, Menteith,
What is the price that I must pay for them?

Ment. To bide in Edward's peace, nor keep alive,
Singly, the flame that wastes our wretched country.

Wall. To bide in Edward's peace! humph! well, Menteith?

Ment. And dwell a prisoner at large, within
Dumbarton Castle.

Wall. What! a prisoner,
Saidst thou?

Ment. But under keeping of a friend;—
Under my wardship. Thy consent, I pray thee.
What! not a word? Thou dost not sure mislike
Thy keeper, or mistrust him?

Wall. No, Menteith;

But neither like nor trust his co-conditioners.
They do not mean thee fair.

Ment. Sir Robert Clifford
Is of long time my friend ;—he is their leader :—
From him these terms I tender thee, and under
The plighted safeguard of his knightly honour.
Suspecting their design, I hurried after them,
With what scant force the o'erta'en suddenness
Did furnish me withal. I have a band
Of stout M'Aulays from the Levenside,
Faithful tho' few ; and should he play me false—
Should he but swerve one tittle from our bond,
While there remaineth of my band a man,
And of my blood a drop, I will not 'bate
A hair's-breadth of thy rights.

Wall. But with the tryste
Thou wot'st of, on the Borough-moor, so near too.

Ment. Wallace, that cause thou knowest is dear to me
As 't is to thee ; and thou dost know, moreover,
By sacred pact, I 'm pledged to render up
Dumbarton Castle to its rightful king,
Soon as De Bruce unfurls his royal banner
Upon his native soil.—Bide we our time :
That nut 's not yet a-brown.

Wall. Well then, Menteith, to thee, and to thine honour,
I render me, but to no Southron living,—
Thou 'rt sure our friends are safe ?

Ment. And with my life
I will be bound for theirs. Now let me call
Some of my followers to bind thine arms.

Wall. To bind mine arms, Monteith! Nay, never, never,
I'll never yield to that!

Ment. Nay, 't is but seeming,
And for thy safety. They'll mistrust us else.
The Southrons fear thee so, that from mere terror,
If thou 'rt at large, they'll do thee violence.

Wall. Well, be it so; thou 'lt see our terms enforced.

Ment. On my faith's pledge—with my life's warranty.—
Leave me to deal with them.

(MENTEITH *here introduces a band of* M'AULAYS, *his own followers. English soldiers in the distance behind them.* WALLACE *offers his arms, which the* M'AULAYS *bind securely with strong cords.*)

Ment. Noble De Clifford, Wallace is thy prisoner.
I know thou 'lt use him as one brave man will
Another brave man in adversity.
I go before you to Dumbarton Castle,
To give thee and thy prisoner due reception. [*Exit.*

[WALLACE *is led out guarded.*

Scene Second.

NEAR THE FORMER.

(*Enter* DAVID WYLIE.)

Dav. I do not like this news. Why should De Clifford,
All o' the sudden, and with such a following,
Steal from the castle under cloud of night,
Shaping his course to north? So much is certain:

Something 's afoot. I pray they be a-watch,
And Kerle the sentinel: for Heaven assoil me,
I do not like that youth. Methinks his eye
Doth speak another language than his tongue,
And that his acts do over-act affection.
He hath too much o' the form and phrase of duty
To have the real'ty. But who comes here?
Ha! can it be? the very youth I spoke of.
What, ho! M'Aulay, whither art thou bound?

(*Enter* M'AULAY.)

M'A. To the old rock, boy.

Dav. To Dumbarton Castle?
On private mission to thine uncle, ha!—
I prithee, where is Wallace?

M'A. On his voyage
To the same port.

Dav. That 's sudden.

M'A. Sudden! ay,
And unexpected too, I warrant him.

Dav. Know'st thou what moved him to this sudden shift?

M'A. What moves to many shifts—necessity.

Dav. Ha! have his hunters scented him again,
And made him change his lair? Is he attended?

M'A. Ay, like a king; most royally attended.
He 's guarded like a king; he 'll not complain
Of scant attendance, trust me.

Dav. Nay, M'Aulay,
I 'm not a riddle-reader, as thou know'st;
Let my plain question purchase a plain answer—
I 'm not i' the trim for jests.

M'A. Neither is Wallace,
Or I misdeem. Faith, 't is no jest for him.
Dav. What is no jest for him?
M'A. To be hand-gyved
I' the highroad to the gallows.
Dav. Ha! what saidst thou?—
Nay, nay, it cannot be: for, were it so,
Thou ne'er couldst make it matter for thy mirth.
Where's Kerle?
M'A. Asleep.
Dav. Asleep!
M'A. Ay, in the sleep
Whence but one blast can wake him,—he is dead.
Dav. Dead!
M'A. As his grandsire. The Robroyston rooks
Will croak their grace o'er him ere morrow's eve.
Dav. Nay, nay, M'Aulay, thou dost time this ill,
I'm on the spur of haste: I must see Wallace.
My news import him much: it is no jesting time;
I prithee, where is he?
M'A. I've told thee, fool;
And told without a jest. He's to Dumbarton,
De Clifford's prisoner; and I'm posting after
I' the hope to see him hanged.
Dav. De Clifford's prisoner!
Ha! that doth tell like truth. But, heaven and earth!
Why dost thou speak it thus? Was Kerle not there?
Did he not stand by him?
M'A. He was asleep;
He's in a sounder now.

Dav. And thou, M'Aulay?
M'A. I was a looker-on!
Dav. A looker-on!
No more?
M'A. O yes, more than a looker-on;
'T was I did slip the Philistines upon him;
'T was I did drug their sleep; 't was I provided
My brave M'Aulays with the hempen withe,
Did lash his felon arms even to the cracking.
Dav. And, O most reprobate and tenfold devil!
Why didst thou do all this?
M'A. Why did I do it?
Oh, I have plotted it by night, by day;
I've brooded over it—glutted my fancy with 't;
Yea, I have lived upon the thought of it;
For weeks it hath been meat and drink to me;
My nightly watch I've made to speed with it;
My daily service I have sweetened with it;
Rest, rest thee now, poor ghost! thou art avenged.
Dav. Avenged; whom talkest thou of?
M'A. My brother Aulay.
He slew my only brother in the Torwood,
By Haliburton's side.
Dav. By Haliburton's!
Ha! was thy brother there?
Thou hell-born adder of a damned nest,
That crept'dst into the bosom thou wouldst sting,
Know I did help to crush thy reptile brother.
M'A. Thou help to crush him! Aulay was a man.
Ha! ha! what! thou 'rt a chafe young cock'rel, art thou,

And fain wouldst show a crest! Thou help to crush him!
Thou mouse rampant—thou four-foot-nothing Hercules,
Had I but time and twig to waste on thee,
I'd cool thy choler with a birchen pill.
But I must on—I would not miss the sport;
Wilt come and see thy master hang, boy?

Dav. Wretch!
Thy serpent's eye shall ne'er look on that sight.
Nay, stir not—strive not—hence thou ne'er shalt go;
Thy foot is on thy grave,—O Wallace! Wallace!
Thy wrongs sit heavy on my sword, and on
This perjured villain's soul.

(*They fight,* M'AULAY *is slain.*)

Lie there and rot,
The curse of Scotland for thine epitaph;
O had I done this deed but yesterday!

[*Exit hastily.*

Scene Third.

DUMBARTON CASTLE.

Enter LADY COMYN *and* JAILOR.

Jail. There is the donjon, lady; this unlocks it.

(*Presenting a key.*)

Lady C. I thank thee, friend.

[*Exit* JAILOR.

But what hath brought me hither? Till this moment
I have not dared to ask myself that question.

To look on him did scorn me,—in his cage,—
And feast on my revenge? Fie, that were devilish!
Ah! how this tell-tale blood, this fitful tide
That ebbs and flows in wild alternative
Of fierce and faint, reveals another hope
Ere it hath bodied it to shape of thought,—
Perchance he may relent;—
What then? it comes too late; I'll in, however,
Though it were only but to look on him
For the last time, and say farewell to him!

(*Unlocks the door of the dungeon softly;* WALLACE *discovered chained and asleep.*)

Ha! fast asleep. Such power hath innocence!
I have not slept to-night. How legibly
Hath Heaven's own finger, on that noble brow,
Writ MAN! I dare not look on him,
For every look doth kill a purpose in me—
Melt to remorse,—awake the woman in me,
And shoot a dizzying faintness to my soul.
O were that heart atune to mine,—let prudes,
Let priests, say what they might, I'd follow thee,
Even to the world's end. But hush! he wakes.
Wall. (*rising.*) Methought I heard a voice; but it was nothing.
I've seen o' late what makes me fancy's fool
In things of sight and sound.
Lady C. (*coming forward.*) Nay, 'twas no fancying,
It was my voice,—the voice of one doth pity thee,
And shames to find thee here. Ungrateful Scotland!

Is this the place, the guerdon thou decreest
To thy deliverer?

Wall. Lady, 't is such a place
As William Wallace many a year has looked
To be the tenant of.

Lady C. That heartless villain!
What moved him to this deed?

Wall. He is a man.

Lady C. A man! say'st thou! he 's none; he is a devil!
Wallace, wouldst thou be free? Menteith has sold thee,—
Ay, to the shambles; wouldst thou not be free?—
Thou answerest not.

Wall. I 'm not in love with death,
Nor much afraid of him: we have been playfellows
Too long for that.

Lady C. Thou wouldst accept deliverance
On terms, wouldst not?

Wall. Ay, lady, on such terms
As honesty and honour might abide with.

Lady C. Instance me, now.

Wall. Strike from mine arms these tangles,
Restore me my good sword: give me arm's room
I' the open field, and let me feel the breeze
That sweeps in freedom from the Lennox hills,
My face a-north: and then let Robert Clifford
Plant him atween, backed by his forty followers,
And bar my passage thorough, if they may.
This venture will I for my freedom, lady.

Lady C. Nay, nay, that will not do; they will not listen
to 't;

Is there nought else? Were love thy ransomer,
Wouldst thou repay 't with love? (WALLACE *is silent.*)
Thou dost not answer me.
If once thou quit these walls, there 's not on earth
Can stand betwixt thee and a dreadful doom.
I have some means—it boots not tell thee how—
While thou art here to work thy franchising:—
Say thou wilt take me for thy 'scape-fellow,
And pay me love for love, I 'll follow thee
Even to the round earth's bourne,—
Partner thy fortunes, be they winter-blasted,
Or summer-blossoming; for the trim terrace,
I 'll take my pleasure in the forest maze;
Exchange my down-bed for a couch of fern;
My carved chamber for a moss-brown cave;
Make me a palace of the outlaw's den,
And turn the wild wood to a paradise!
Thou wilt not say me nay—
Wall. Lady, 't were easy,
Could I but stoop my manhood to the task,
To cozen credence with a glozing tale,
Framed to the need,—like to the shallow vow
Made by the hypocrite i' the hurricane,
That doffs observance when the danger 's by.
But I 'm a soldier, and unschooled i' the art
Doth own the devil for its first professor;
I cannot promise where I do not purpose
Performance honestly. I pray thee, leave me;
Thy presence here but mocks my sunken fortune,
And wrongs thy better self.

Lady C. Art thou prepared, then,
To be the gaze of every paltry village,
As thou art driven to thy slaughter-house;
Set up i' th' market-place, a flouting-stock
For rascal mobs to stale their vileness on?
Hast thou prepared thee for thy doom—a death
Not such as soldiers smile to look upon
I' the honoured field, with glory's garnish on 't,
But such as felons die—doled out to thee
With such nice measuring, that every drop
Of pain and shame shall give its flavour to thee.—
Art thou prepared for this?

Wall. Lady, I am,
With Heaven's good grace in aid. There have been those
Who, rather than in one enforced phrase,
Give breath to blasphemy, or duck the head,
In sign of reverence, to a senseless thing
Of stock or stone, did quaff the molten metal,
Enter the furnace fierce with tenfold fires,
Face the starved lion in his den,—or give
Their naked bodies to the shameful gibbet!
There have been such,—women among them too,
Yea, tender virgins in the bud of life,
Soft from the mother stalk; and yet they shrunk not
From fear of death, nor from the keener pang
Of maiden shame; and shall a man, a soldier,
Where these have played the man, enact the woman?

Lady C. Am I so scorned then? Look on me, proud man,
Am I so hideous foul in flesh and form,

So vile to sense, that thou dost count my love
Worse than the worst of deaths ?

Wall. No, lady, no ;
Thy beauty well might tempt a nicer eye,
And shake a firmer breast :
But mine is lorded by one only passion,
That will not brook a partner. I have vowed
My hand, my heart, my life, to widowed Scotland,
Her liegeman and her lover. And, bethink thee,
How could I trumpet forth my country's wrongs,
How could I rail against my country's robbers,
How could I battle for my country's rights,
Standing upon my holiness of cause,
While I myself did wrong, did rob my neighbour
Of his most holy and most hearted rights,
A bawling patriot and a base adulterer !

Lady C. Farewell, proud fool, then—thou art frenetic—
I leave thee to thy fate : nay, go to lend it
Whate'er the working of a woman's brain,
Sharpened by scorn, made furious by revenge,
Can be the mother or the midwife to.

[*Exit, locking the dungeon.*

Scene Fourth.

APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE.

(*Enter* SIR JOHN MENTEITH.)

Ment. Part of my recompense I have already
Fast in my coffers: but the better part
Is still expectancy. Ha! here's one item of 't,
A bribe to bait the devil's hook withal,
When he doth angle for a nicer prey;
A morsel might provoke the shrivelled anchorite
To break his flesh-fast on a dish of sin!—
Comyn forestalled me once: but now I have
Double amend in one—of him and her—

(*Enter* LADY COMYN.)

Aha! fair lady, who's the laugher now?
Have I miscarried? You have looked on him;
Have I not cooped the eagle in his cage,
And marred his farther flight? Is 't not himself?
I claim thy forfeit bond.

Lady C. What forfeit claimest thou?

Ment. Lady, thy promised love.

Lady C. My promised love!
Thou vile kidnapping caterer for the gallows!
Thou that didst sell the life's-blood of thy friend
For a knave's hire—stealing upon his slumbers,
As does the crawling thief that robs a hen-roost!
Thou claim a woman's love! go claim thy pay,
Thy hangman's pay—content thee therewithal,—

But from Joan de Valence, look for nought
Save her abborrence, and her loathing scorn. [*Exit.*

Ment. (*solus.*) Here is a cordial for a qualmy conscience!
A thank-speech from a setter-on to sin!
St. Rule defend now this disease be catching,
Or I shall prosper like Sir Puss i' the fable,
Burnt his fool's paw, yet bagged him ne'er a chestnut.
Nay, nay; I have his bond; I 'll to the south though,
Lest this she-devil be beforehand with me,
And rob me of the what I 've dearly worked for. [*Exit.*

Scene Fifth.

DUMFRIES—CLOISTERS OF THE GREYFRIARS MONASTERY.

(*Enter* COMYN *and* BRUCE.)

Com. They wrong me vilely, and thou wrongst me too,
In giving ear-room for an instant to it,
So foul a fiction.

Br. I pray thee, not so loud. Our friends are near;
They must not know of this our cloudy greeting;
Let us within here. [*Exeunt.*

Scene changes to the interior of the church.

(*Re-enter* COMYN *and* BRUCE.)

Com. I—I! have secret dealing with King Edward!
What! I betray our oath-fast covenant!

Br. Ay: it is said so, Comyn: nay, that thou
Didst send him even the authentic bond,
With seal of arms we both did ratify—

Com. Now, by St. Bryde! this shall be answered for.
Name me my foul defamer.

Br. —And, moreover,
That thou, on sundry grounds of policy,
Didst motion Edward to my taking off,
Pledging thyself, on the contracted day,
To rid the king of Wallace and my brothers.

Com. And hast thou faith for this?

Br. 'T is said, besides,
That thou hast sent thy cousin, Sir James Comyn,
To be thy doer, and thine hostager,
I' the English court.

Com. But, heaven and earth! De Bruce,
Dost thou believe all this?

Br. Nay, but De Comyn, didst thou do all this?

Com. Save Robert Bruce, no man durst ask that question,
And brook one hour's lease o' the breath did utter it.
But thou art privileged. Name me the villain
Hath drugged thy fancy with this damned tale,
That I may wash mine honour in his blood.

Br. Dost thou deny it, then?

Com. Do I deny it?
Dost thou, De Bruce, and darest thou believe it?

(*Enter* Sir James Lindsay, *hastily.*)

Lind. My lords, I pray you pardon this intrusion:
A messenger, and on the fume of haste,
Would speak my Lord of Carrick instantly.

Br. A moment's leave, my Lord of Badenach.

[*Exeunt* BRUCE *and* LINDSAY.

Com. (*solus.*) By all the saints! but this is passing strange,
And most inopportune. So bravely planned too!
One little week had placed it past the marring.
Should this be guess-work now? No, no, it cannot be,
For it doth hit each veriest circumstance
Too nicely true for that. Who hath betrayed me?
There are but two are privy to my purpose,
King Edward, and my cousin bears that packet,
And them self-interest seals sure to silence.
But howsoe'er it be, for the either upshot
I will fore-arm me; to De Bruce out-face it,
But place, meanwhile, mine uncle, with my followers,
Within the call of need. [*Exit.*

Scene changes to the cloisters of the same.

(*Enter* BRUCE *and* DAVID WYLIE.)

Br. Oh! 't is a tale of horror and of shame,
That Scotland long shall weep in tears of blood for!
Alas! for William Wallace! Damned Menteith!
Thou worthy co-mate of the traitor Comyn.
He 's in my power; and thou dost bide thy turn.
Go, call me Lindsay and Kirkpatrick hither.
Await me here without. Cheer thee, brave boy;
I loved him even as thou didst; and the friend
Thou 'st lost in Wallace, thou shalt find in Bruce.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene changes again to the interior of the church.

(COMYN *walking about. To him enters* BRUCE, *agitated.*)

Com. My Lord of Annandale, that villainous tale—

Br. —Is true as thou art false.

Com. As I am false! ha!
Darest thou repeat that charge?

Br. I dare and do,
Even to thy traitor's teeth.
I do impeach thee here of perjury—
Treachery to me, and to thy country treason:
I do accuse thee of my purposed murder;
I do attaint thee as a vile accomplice
In that most damned deed of shame, the seizure
Of William Wallace—

Com. Ha! of William Wallace!—
Is he then seized?

Br. Dost thou plead ignorance?

Com. I do, and honestly. If he be seized,
By heaven, and all it holds, I had no hand in 't.

Br. Oh, ye were brother-anglers, and Menteith
Has had the better luck, that 's all.

Com. Menteith!

Br. Ay, and thy virtuous lady! Paltering knave,
Didst make a shuffle of thy soul-plight oath—

Com. He lies that speaks me so.

Br. Ha! lie, doth he?
Then he who speaks thee so is John de Comyn;
'T is thou canst best describe him. Here 's his hand to it.

(*Showing the intercepted packet.*)

Com. That packet! Ha! what pilfering knave purloined,
Or traitor rendered that?
Br. Thy worthy cousin:
And here 's the key (*drawing his sword*) unlocked the chest
that held it.
Com. What! and my cousin, then, Sir James de Comyn—
Br. Is gone before, to herald thee to hell.
He 's still thy messenger: prepare to follow him.
Com. Wouldst thou do sacrilege? This place is holy—
Br. The fitter, therefore, for a holy deed.
In such a place as this didst thou be-mock
The ear of Heaven with a two-faced oath.
Call it not sacrilege; it is a sacrifice;
And Heaven, and all good men, will count it so.
Defend thee.
(BRUCE *falls on* COMYN, *who exclaims*)
Com. Ho! Sir Robert Comyn! ho!
Br. This for my country; this for William Wallace;
And this for Robert Bruce! [COMYN *falls; exit* BRUCE.

Scene changes to the cloisters.

(LINDSAY, KIRKPATRICK, *and* DAVID WYLIE.)

Lind. Here comes De Bruce; but, Heaven! how pale he
looks;
His sword a-bloody, and his look a-wild! (*Enter* BRUCE.)
My lord, I pray thee, what hath happed?
Br. I charged
The traitor with his crimes—rehearsed each circumstance—

Produced my vouching—he did call me liar—
And I—I doubt me, I have slain him, Lindsay.

Kirkp. Doubt'st thou, Sir King; I make it sicker then.
[*Exit.*

Lind. 'Tis not a deed to be but halfly done. [*Exit.*

(*Re-enter* LINDSAY *and* KIRKPATRICK.)

Kirkp. The traitor, and his uncle, Robert Comyn,
Have their quietus now,—but their clan's up—
There is no tarrying here; let us to horse!
Ho! for Lochmaben Castle.

Lind. Nay, Kirkpatrick,
Rather for Scone, and to the crowning-stone.
There must no dallying now!—the sword is out:
Scotland doth lack a king, and her liege lord
Must buckle on his rights.

Br. He must so, Lindsay,
And he will do it, be it life or death,
A scaffold or a throne. To horse! to horse, then!
We, first, must prove the mettle of their heels,
And then their bearing in the noble field.
Follow me, faithful boy; thy services
Are in my heart's roll writ; nor will they lack
A king's remembering or remunerance. [*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

Scene First.

LONDON—THE PALACE.

(*Enter* LADY COMYN.)

Lady C. So ends my goodly plot, my lodging him
'Stead o' the tower, in Fenchurch Street, and in
The wardship of my creature, William Delect,
Ev'n like the rest, miscarried! Lectured too,
Like some poor Magd'lene by a pulseless shaveling!
This monk in mail!—pride-frosted fanatic!
I 've been the foot-ball of his scorn too long.
But now
The blood of Valence is a-boil within me!
It drowns the fond, inflames the injured woman,
And quenches every passion but revenge.
But hush! here comes mine uncle, and the Queen.

(*Enter* KING EDWARD *and* QUEEN MARGARET.)

Ed. Fye, 'tis the doting of some crazed monk,
Makes divination of an ill digestion,
And starts a prophet on his stomach's call—
I will appeal me to my cousin here.

Lady C. What is the question, pray thee, good my lord?

Ed. A foolish vision of a foolish monk,
Touching this traitor Scot, hath scared the Queen
From her sound wits: and she would scare me too
From doing justice on this homicide.
What dost thou think he merits?

Lady C. Death, my lord,
A traitor's death—death on the gallows-tree—
With every circumstance can give 't addition.

Queen. Fye, fye, Joan! thou dost forget the woman.

Ed. Nay, by my faith, she's in the right on't, wife.
But canst thou read me, cousin, by what spells
This Norland Hercules doth turn the heads
Of all our English women—thine excepted?
For ever since the day ye went from me
To Wallace at St. Alban's, truce-begging,
He 's witched the Queen. Were he at large, i' faith,
I would be jealous of him. Tell me now,
I warrant me he vowed himself her knight,
And promised her, when he had slain old Longshanks,
A bran-new husband o' the northern cut,
And half his throne to sit on.

Queen. Fye, my lord,
This jesting suits not with the time or subject
Or with thy better self. A brave man's fate
Is not fit jest for soldier or for king.

Ed. How chanced, Joan, thou 'scapedst this epidemy?
I warrant me, thou 'st seen him oft in Scotland:
He is a goodly man, ha? is he not—
To fill a woman's eye?

Lady C. He is, indeed, Sir.

Ed. But thou are Scot-proof, English to the core,
And hatest him, I doubt not, even as I do—
That 's as the devil.

Lady C. Sir, I love my country.

Queen. Fye, fye, my lord, you do forget yourself—
Her husband is a Scot.

Ed. Now, by the Mass,
He is so, wife : and I do hate them so,
I had forgot me : but, mayhap, my cousin,
Like other wives, doth love her husband's enemy.

Queen. Who loves her husband's glory and good name
Best loves her husband's self. Both are at stake now :
And I am jealous for mine husband's honour.

Ed. Nay, pray thee, wife, no more : 'tis not a matter
For lady counsel. Scotland again 's a-fire—
One rebel has escaped : but, Heaven to thank,
The greater 's in my power : he shall not 'scape.
He owes me large amend—the past, the future,
Call for his death alike : By Heaven he dies !

[*Exit* EDWARD.

Queen. Then, noble Wallace, Heaven have mercy on thee—
Or rather, for thou need 'st it more, Heaven pardon thee,
My hasty, wilful, and hot-headed husband !

Lady C. What was this vision that the king did speak of ?

Queen. Oh, it doth make me sad. It is most strange—
But come with me, and I will tell it thee. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Second.

WESTMINSTER HALL—THE BENCH.

(EDWARD *in the centre*—SIR PETER MALLORY, *Chief Justice, and the other Judges, on either side of him, but seated a little lower. At the bar,* WALLACE *heavily ironed, with a crown of laurel on his head. At his right hand,* SIR JOHN DE SEGRAVE, *acting Grand Marshal of England; on his left,* SIR GEOFFREY HARTLEPOOL, *Recorder of London. Behind,* SHERIFF, GUARDS, *and a crowd of Spectators.*)

Ed. Thou'st heard this chronicle of crimes rehearsed,
—And 'tis a bloody and a damning one,—
If thou hast aught that may, in mitigance,
Better thee, speak.

Sir Peter Mallory. Answer, thou man of blood.

Wallace. A man of blood,
Sir Justice, I have been: for which may Heaven,
Of its high grace, assoil me! but the blood
Is on my sword is blood of enemies—
Invaders and usurpers:—He who sent them
To do the wrong should bide the reckoning.

Sir P. M. Art thou not all that, in this royal presence,
I have appeached thee of!

Wall. What's that?

Ed. A rebel—
A traitor to thy king—an outlawed felon,
Consort with thieves and caterans, do own
No homestead but the forest, nor no calling

To live a-by but reif and robbery?
Hast thou not burned our towns, pillaged our churches,
Harried our lands? – for each, the least of which,
The law doth judge thee dead; and for them all,
Doom thee a death cruel and infamous.

Wall. Were law my judge, and its administers
Men who would dare voice forth its oracle
In uprightness and freedom,—'twere light task,
My Lord of England, to redargue what,
Wedding fair actions to ill-favoured names,
Thou wouldst pervert to crimes. But where I stand,
It boots me nothing to defend myself,
Since trial follows doom.

Ed. Darest thou gainsay 't?
Art thou not all thou art attainted of,
A rebel and a traitor to thy king?

Wall. And who is he, King Edward?

Ed. Even King Edward.

Wall. I know no king of Scotland of that name.

Ed. I am thy king, and Scotland's, traitor!

Wall. No.—
To Scotland's fealty thou hast no claim
Of birthright or election. Thou hast been
Her umpire, her usurper, not her king;
Umpire from her, usurper from thyself;
Never her rightful lord. A despot's laws
Hallowed a robber's rights: And might hath been
Of both alike the source and sanctifier.

Sir P. M. Prisoner, in speaking thus, thou doom'st thyself:

By treasonous speech thou dost thy treasonous acts
Avouch and aggravate. Bethink thee, pray,—
What sayest thou to the rest?

Wall. Sir Justice, nothing,
That may avail me here. That I have slain
Full many a subject of the king of England
It is well known: I do acknowledge it—
Nor doth my conscience prick me thereupon:
For I did slay but men, mine enemies;
The blood of helpless age, of innocent youth,
Of priest or woman, have I never shed.
That I have spoiled your cities and your fields
Is also true:
But I have done it as your enemy,
In open 'gainstanding of open war,
On provocation and on precedent—
And who is he arraigns me thereupon?

Sir P. M. I do, and on our sovereign lord's behalf,
King Edward's.

Wall. What! for King Edward! he, by stratagem,
Did fall on Berwick town upon Good Friday,
And left no Scot alive in 't; not the priest
On knee before his altar, nor the mother
In her mid throes of birth, the bed-fast beldame,
The shrieking virgin, or the laughing babe,
Till all the mill-dams, then on ebb o' the tide,
Almost a-dry, swelled by this murder cloud,
Did fill to overflow,—and not one drop
Circled alive, of that but yesternight
Did feed the pulse of thirty thousand Scots!

Or is 't that Edward, in the barns of Ayr,
Did hold his black and bloody Parliament,
Hanging, like hounds in couples on the baulks,
Twelve score, the prime of Scotland's baronage,
Trusted his faith,—unlibelled, and unshriven!

Sir G. Hartlepool. (*giving Wallace a blow on the cheek*)
Thou foul-mouthed traitor! darest thou thus insult,
Even on the judgment-seat, thy king and doomsman?

Wall. My judge and doomsman, not my king, Sir Knight.
Right well his tender mercies do I know:
Nor am I unprepared.—
That day I buckled on my sword for Scotland,
I knew my venture, and I took it freely.
Victor, I knew ten thousand lives I saved;
Vanquished, I lost mine own. I have been vanquished—
Fairly or not, it boots not here to question—
I 'm doomed to death, I who, for many a year,
Looked when I woke to meet him ere I slept—
He comes not unawares.

Ed. My Lord Chief-Justice,
He owns his crimes, defends and glories in them.
Pronounce his doom.

Sir P. M. Prisoner, the heavy doom
The law denounces on thy heavy crimes,
Is this: that thou be drawn to th' Elms at Smithfield,
And there, upon a gibbet, by the neck
That thou be hanged for robbery and murder:—
And, for thy treasons 'gainst our lord the king,
Thy traitor's heart be plucked forth from thy breast,
Ere thou be dead, and burnt before thy face:—

That then thou be beheaded and dismembered,
Thy quartered members at the king's disposal,
To be set up, memorials of thy crime
And of its punishment :—All this to fall thee,
What time his highness may determine of.

(WALLACE *bows in silence.*)

(*Enter, hastily, the* EARL OF PEMBROKE.)

Ed. Ha! cousin, welcome. Thou art come in time
To see this valiant, vaunting, would-be king,
Crowned, as he prophesied, at Westminster.
But there is matter in thy look : what news
From Scotland ?

Pemb. So it please your highness,
I would impart them to your private ear.

Ed. Nay, out with them: let Wallace hear them: they 're
The last, I guess, that he will hear from Scotland.

Pemb. I would your Grace had otherwise determined ;
But they are these in brief. The traitor Bruce,
How 'scaped I know not, hath arrived in Scotland,
And at Dumfries, in private conference
At the high altar of the Minorites,
Slaughtered my brother-in-law, Sir John de Comyn.

Ed. What, Pembroke! Comyn slaughtered by De Bruce!
And at the altar too!—

Pemb. Even so, my liege :—
Which done, the murderer with his followers,
Lindsay, Kirkpatrick, and his brother Edward,
Fled towards Perth ;—where Fife, even to a man,

Clydesdale, and Annandale, Ayr and the Levenox,
Do flock by daily thousands to his standard.
Ed. Ha! is there with him any Scot of note
Save those you named?
Pemb. The outlawed Earl of Lennox,
Sinclair the Bishop of Dunkeld, young Douglas,
Sir Simon Frazer and Sir Gilbert Hay,
With many more. From Sark to John o' Groat's,
Scotland is up; the general rallying-cry,—
Vengeance for Wallace—to the Southrons death!
Ed. Ha! 'tis well thought of. These Scots rebels lack
Some relic of the saint they worship by,
To keep their courage hot: and they shall have it.
Off with that traitor to the gallows, Segrave!—
Seg. What! now, my liege!—not now—
Ed. This very instant.
And ere the set of sun, see thou I have
His traitor limbs well packed, to send to Scotland—
They 'll lend some spirit to his brother rebels
To shout their treason cry. Ha! smilest thou, Scot?
Wall. O noble Bruce, well hast thou kept thy tryste,
Though fortune proved my let. Thou wilt achieve
What Wallace leaves undone. The lot of Heaven
Doth fall on thee, the younger and the worthier:
And thou, or I misread thy noble nature,
Wilt justify the call. Methinks from far,
I catch the cloud-break of thy coming day,
Bright for thyself, and for thy country, glorious,—
And, in the blessed foreview, die content.
Go on and prosper—win thine own, and wear it—

Brook it long years in peace—be loved, be honoured—
And from thy loins issue a stream of kings
Knows no exhausting, that shall sceptre it
Over this chosen land—in blood and brotherhood
Then one sea-bordered isle—shall rear a race
In mind and mould nerved by their bracing clime
To be the type of manhood, and to shine
The lights and living models of the world.

Ed. What! is the traitor turned a prophet too?
Off with the raving second-sighted madman!
Follow me, Pembroke.

Wall. Ere I go, Sir King,
One boon, the first and last that William Wallace
E'er sued thee for: the office of a priest,
And some brief moments for a shriving time.

Ed. Neither—thou shalt have neither—priest nor shrift,
Nor shriving time. Off to the gallows with him!
And at his peril see no priest come near him.

(*A murmur arises among the crowd.*)

Ha! who is he dares question or gainsay
Our royal will? What, Winchelsea, is 't thou?
Upon thy peril—

Winchel. Be 't at my peril then.
I must not pause, even at thy royal bidding.

Ed. Art thou turned traitor, too, rebellious priest,—
Dost thou not dread a king's displeasure?

Win. Yes:
And therefore dread not thine, but second to 't.
I have another King, another Master,
Must first be served.

Ed. Ha! Segrave, seize on him—
Off to the Tower with him!
Win. Segrave, stand back—
Should he—shouldst thou, but lay one finger on me,
In bar o' the duty I am now upon,
Thyself and kingdom from all mean of grace,
From sin-absolving seal of sacrament,
Even from that moment I do interdict;
And thee thyself declare an excommunicate,
Cut off from holy church.
Sir P. M. Nay, good my lord,
Give way in this. Refusal will but win him
The popular heart: and my Lord Pembroke's news,
And needs therefrom arising, do dissuade
From strife with holy church.
Pemb. My Lord Chief-Justice
Doth counsel wisely: good my liege, consider on 't.
Ed. Priest, to thy task then—but be brief in it,
Or 'twill be marred. Segrave, look thou to this.

[*Exeunt* EDWARD, PEMBROKE, MALLORY, *etc.*

(*Procession moves forward.* WALLACE *in conversation with* WINCHELSEA *betwixt* SEGRAVE *and* HARTLEPOOL, *Sheriffs, Guards, etc.*)

— —

Scene Third.

THE PALACE.

(EDWARD *and* PEMBROKE.)

Ed. There be already in the northern parts
Full thirty thousand men. Clifford and Percy
Will join thy march to-morrow with the lark,
And I will after thee with such a force—
But, in the devil's name, what hubbub 's this?

(*Enter* QUEEN, *agitated.*)

What is the matter, wife? hast seen a ghost?
Thou look'st as one that hath.

Queen. My lord, my lord!
The holy friar is dead.

Ed. And if ten thousand friars be dead, I care not—
What 's that to me?

Queen. Oh, it is much, my lord!
Would thou hadst listened to my earnest prayer!

Ed. And saved mine enemy to save thy friar.

Queen. Nay, nay, to save thyself. His death doth prove
That vision was prophetic. Part 's fulfilled—
I shudder at the rest.

Pemb. What vision 's this
That doth disturb your highness so?

Queen. O Pembroke!
But 'tis too late. The holy friar John,
Warned in a vision, did foretell that he
Should sicken at the very moment Wallace

Received his doom :—and he did sicken suddenly
Even on the turn of noon :—and that, moreover,
Their spirits should take flight at the same instant,
And he but now is dead.

Ed. Is it so marvellous
That an old brain-sick, bed-rid visioner,
Should guess so near his death's hour ?

Queen. And, besides,
It was revealed him that the one same instant,
From th' penal place assoil'd, should see them both
Mansioned in Paradise.

Pemb. And was this all, madam ?

Queen. Alas ! it was not all. The vision bore,
That from the moment Wallace had his doom,
His doomsman ne'er should listen happy news
Nor live one hour of peace : that he should never
Set foot on Scottish land, nor his posterity
Hold inch thereof : that he himself should die,
Baffled and balked even within sight of it.

Pemb. But, madam, gave this friar no sign in token
His vision was a true one, and not purely
His fever's prophecy ?

Queen. He gave this sign :
That on the instant that his spirit parted,
The Abbey bells, even by a long hour's space—

(*Enter* LADY COMYN *hurriedly.*)

Lady C. My lord, my lord !

Ed. What now, I pray thee, cousin ?
Art thou mad too ? Is there another friar
Turned prophet for the nonce ?

Lady C. My lord, my lord,
The inmates of the Abbey, all aghast,
Have fled their monastery. Some half-hour gone,
Good Friar John did part; and ever since,
Unrung by mortal hand, the Abbey bells
Have tolled most mournful and unearthly music,
Nor can they be a-stopped. The frightened citizens
Do gather round in crowds, agape with terror,
Looking for something strange. (*Enter* OFFICER.)

Ed. More miracles?
Art thou, too, charged with marvels? what 's thy news?

Off. Tidings, my liege, from Scotland, that De Bruce
Is crowned at Scone, and all beyond the Forth
In arms for him.

(*Enter another* OFFICER.)

Ed. Art thou from Scotland, too?
Out with thy secret, man!

Off. May 't please your highness,
John de Bretagne, the captain of your host,
Hath been defeated by the rebel Scots,
And with most slaughterous loss.

Ed. More news from hell?
Well, sir?

(*Third* OFFICER.)

Off. My lord, in haste I come to give you notice.
Berwick hath fallen—Dumfries and Stirling Castles
Are in the rebels' hands—Dunbar 's besieged—
Roxburgh in jeopardy—Perth hath surrendered.

Ed. Another post from purgatory, Clifford,
With his black budget—

(*Enter* CLIFFORD.)

What quaint masquer 's here,
Thou play'st Sir Usher to?

Clif. A herald, charged
To tender ransom for Sir William Wallace;
He craves immediate speech.

Ed. Ransom for Wallace!
There 's one, and but one fee can ransom him,
And that is Bruce's head.

(*Enter* HERALD.)

Well, sir, what says
That rebel runaway? Holds he not treason,
Crime black enough, that he must double damn him
With sacrilege and murder? for his fellow,
What doth the rebel offer us?

(GRIMSBY, *the Herald.*)

Grim. Three thousand pounds in gold—the town of Berwick,
And Roxburgh Castle to be thine for ever.

Ed. He offers us our own; he 's generous! Well, sir,
An' if they be refused? But here comes one,

(*Enter* GLOSTER.)

Or I misguess, will save me further breath,
And give thee answer. Thou art from the Elms
At Smithfield, Gloster, art thou not?

Glost. I am.

Ed. Here 's one from Bruce tenders me tempting ransom
For that Scots traitor.

Glost. Wallace is beyond
The reach of ransom or of wrong—he 's dead,

Queen. Dead!

Lady C. Impossible! what! dead already!
'Twas but even now he did receive his sentence.

Ed. Hear'st thou, Sir Herald, art thou answered now?

Grim. I am. A bloody and a damned answer;
With bloody reckoning shall 't be answered to.

Ed. Recount the manner of his death, Lord Gloster,
And give this Scot assurance. But what ails thee—
Thine eyes are red—hast thou been weeping, man?
How did the traitor die?

Glost. My liege, his death,
Even like his life, was noble. In my time
I 've stood the brunt of many a well-fought field,
And seen the road to death take many paths,
Painful to tread, and pitiful to look on,
But never did this salty rheum bescald
My soldier's eye before.

Ed. Gloster, I read thee,
Choose fitter phrase in speaking of a traitor.
Thou talk'st as thou wert a fee'd rhetorist,
Hired to stick flowers upon his monument.
To the circumstances: Did he call in question
The justice of his doom, and the brief space
Did interval its executing?

Glost. Neither.—
In silent but not sullen majesty,
He bore his torture's lingering ordeal,
Which, while it forced the firmest on the shudder,
Even in the looking on, wrung not from him

One audible groan, as with his eye a-fixed
Upon a psalter-book, his mother's gift,
Which he had ever carried in his bosom,
Even from his childhood, and the which a priest
Held up before him, he did gaze thereon
Till the glazed sense grew dark. And when at length
The headsman with his bloody fingers, tore
From forth the mangled trunk his quivering heart,
And flung it in the flames, that eagle eye,
Which I so oft have seen i' the battle's front,
Like heaven's own lightning flash, with one quick glance,
Meek as a seraph's, he turned, smilingly,
Heavenward, then closed, and with a sigh expired.

(QUEEN *faints.*)

Ed. Look to the Queen, there! have her to her chamber.

(*She is borne off.*)

Glost. And when the deathsman held his severed head
Aloft and cried—*Behold a traitor's head!*
Long live King Edward!—not a voice amen'd him;
But the dense multitude, dispartingly,
Fled o' the instant: women did shriek and faint—
Men sobbed—and as I hurried past, I saw
My Lord of Canterbury on his knees,
Weeping aloud.

Lady C. Oh, thou hast murdered him,
Thou bloody Herod! and his righteous blood,
Exhaled to heaven, will rain down sorrows on thee.
All good men's prayers be turned to curses on thee!
The friar's vision be fulfilled on thee!
Never good tidings glad thy savage ear!

Never thine age look on one hour of quiet!
Thy tyrant's couch be conscience-sprent with nettles!
Comfort be banished from thy dying bed!
And when thou diest—

Pemb. Fye, sister, art thou mad?

Lady C. Oh, would I were! for then I should forget
That I 'm his murderess too,—that I have murdered
The noblest, bravest, best—the man I loved—

Ed. Ha! loved! saidest thou?

Pemb. Nay, nay, she doth but rave, sir;
'Tis but her fever speaks.

Lady C. And thou, too, brother,
Owest Heaven atonement for that damnèd deed:
Thou hadst a hand in 't; get thee back to Scotland,
Thy reckoning waits thee there. And as for me—

Ed. Oh! I will look to thee,
Thou blot on womanhood, whose base avouchment
Proclaims thee traitress to thy husband's rights,
As to thy country's! Off to a dungeon with thee,
Shame to thy royal blood!

Lady C. It is a tiger's,
And I disown it. Off to a dungeon, say'st thou?
It is the home I choose, I seek, I speed to,
A cloister's dungeon: where, with nightly tears
And prayers, do tell each hour that day is made of,
I will, with shrift of ever-changing penance,
Cleanse my brief thread of life. Ha! thou here, too,
The only devil of our knot was wanting,
And he of all the blackest and most damned,
Come to refresh the memory of our guilt.

Bloody Plantagenet! here is thy hangman
Come for his murder-fee. [*Exit* LADY COMYN.

(*Enter* MENTEITH.)

Ed. What now, Menteith?

Ment. My liege, I bring thee heavy news from Scotland.

Ed. Then keep them to thyself, sir. Am I cursed
Never to hear but croakings? am I doomed,
To be for ever stunned with Scotland! Scotland!

Grim. Sir King, thou art. That name, thy conscience-knell,
Shall still be pealed into thy startled ear,
Till death doth seal it deaf. My mercy errand,
Thy murder-mockery of law and justice,
Hath cruelly foreclosed. Hear now the after-say,
From Scotland and her king. For this foul deed,
I do denounce thee war, war and defiance,
War to the dagger's hilt,—an unsheathed sword,
Which this day's deed doth edge Heaven's minister
And vowed executor,—and which shall never
Visit its scabbard more, while thou dost live,
Or one that calls thee master shall inherit
Foot of that land owned Wallace for a son.

[*Exit* GRIMSBY.

THE END.

JAMES THE FIRST OF SCOTLAND.

A Tragedy.

IN FIVE ACTS.

JAMES THE FIRST OF SCOTLAND.

The persons introduced as principally concerned in the action of the following tragedy, are, it may be proper to state, with one exception, historical; and in the action itself, historic truth has, in the more important particulars, been adhered to.

The single exception referred to is Sir Walter Luvale. For the part assigned to him in the drama there is no foundation in fact. But there is a tradition that Catherine Douglas did subsequently marry a knight of the name of Luvale or Lovel. And it would appear, that by some, this her married was confounded with her maiden name. '*Alii*,' observes the historian Buchanan, '*Lovelliam edunt.*'

In justification of the cause to which is ascribed the persecution of which Luvale is in the play represented as the object, it may be stated that it had its actual parallel in a like local prophecy, to which a like superstitious faith was accorded, relative to the extinction of another family of note in Scottish history. As, unluckily for himself, Luvale had 'in nature's freak' been gifted with a supernumerary finger, by a similar freak, as we learn from history, Charles the Eighth of France had been furnished with a superfluity of toe, he having, as Guicciardini informs us, six toes on each foot.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

JAMES THE FIRST,	*King of Scotland.*
WALTER STEWART, EARL OF ATHOLE,	*Uncle of the King.*
ROBERT STEWART,	*His Grandson, Chamberlain to the King.*
SIR ROBERT GRÆME,	*Brother to the deceased Earl of Stratherne.*
EARL OF ANGUS,	*Scottish Nobles.*
EARL OF ORKNEY,	*Scottish Nobles.*
SIR WILLIAM CRICHTON,	*Chancellor.*
SIR ANDREW GRAY,	*Knights attending on the King.*
SIR HERBERT MAXWELL,	*Knights attending on the King.*
SIR DAVID DUNBAR,	*Knights attending on the King.*
SIR WALTER LUVALE,	*A Knight.*
PATRICK GRÆME,	*Son of Sir Robert Græme.*
SIR JOHN HALL,	*Conspirators.*
THOMAS HALL,	*Conspirators.*
THOMAS CHAMBERS,	*Conspirators.*
CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS,	*Conspirators.*
CAHOUN,	*Conspirators.*

Lords of Council—Estates of Parliament—Mob—Soldiers, etc.

WOMEN.

JOAN of Somerset,	*Queen of Scotland.*
CATHERINE DOUGLAS,	*Ladies attending on the Queen.*
ELIZABETH DOUGLAS,	*Ladies attending on the Queen.*
MORAG,	*A Highland Spaewife.*

ACT I.

Scene First.

EDINBURGH—AN APARTMENT IN THE HOUSE OF THE EARL OF MONTEITH.

(*Enter, in conversation,* Sir ROBERT GRÆME *and* PATRICK GRÆME.)

Græme. Hotly I took my prisoning in Dunbar;
And when he named Justiciar of Scotland,
The place he knew Duke Murdac promised me,
Sir Robert Lauder, of the Bass, profest
Long time mine enemy—
P. Græme. From Sark to Sumboro',
The land cried shame on him! In all men's thoughts
Thou wert designed the fittest and most capable
For that high trust.
Gr. 'Twas but the weather-gaw
Bodeth the weather-break. I had some favour—
There 's mine offence—with his late noble kinsmen,
The slaughtered house of Albany: and now
I stand no longer in my nephew's shoes,

Tutor to young Stratherne; the simple knight,
Sir Robert Græme, must fare as did his friends,
Allan of Otterburne, Sir Malcolm Fleming,
The Bishop of Argyle, and all on whom
Shone the set sun of Albany.

P. Gr. His uncle,
Earl Walter, is thy friend, and Robert Stewart,
The Earl's gay grandson. They are powerful,
And favourites at Court. They had no hand
In that so bloody act—so bloodily
He 's visited upon the race of Albany—
His brother, the young Duke of Rothsay's murder.

Gr. Ay, they were sakeless there; for then they stood not
Next in degree the throne.

P. Gr. And now they do—

Gr. They have for royalty as sharp a stomach
As e'er Duke Robert had, of Albany.

P. Gr. Is it suspected so?

Gr. I 'm sure of it,
And glad to boot; for until Walter Stewart
Sits King of Scotland in James Stewart's saddle,
It will be Lentran for thyself and me.
Athole is puzzling over ancient prophecies,
As double and as mazed mysterious
As ever Delphian or Druid spake,
Which he unriddles to the tune that likes him;
And Robert Stewart would be Robert Bruce,
A king, aping his great progenitor,
And doing Bannockburn in tournaments!
I feed their humours both.

P. Gr. But the first James
Is firmly on his throne. The Commons love
His genial nature fellows with their mirth,
And makes their junketings and homely sports
Matter his royal songs: nor less for that
With the strong arm of law he vindicates
His humblest liegeman's rights against the proudest,
Be he Sir Priest or Peer. Courtiers and ladies
Love his gay wit, his amorous minstrelsies,
Shows, and court pageants—soldiers his knightly courage;
And, in the matter of the Albanies,
He hath so fenced him with the fellowship
Of Scotland's mightiest, Athole, and Douglas,
Angus, and Crawford, and Dunbar, and Orkney,
The Hays, the Ogilvies,—his cause is theirs,
His crime, his danger theirs. 'Twas their assize
Adjudged Duke Murdac and his sons of treason.

Gr. The scythe that sweeps the gowan on the green
Slays not the gowan's roots. The roots of Albany
Run deep and far through Scotland's baronage;
They're bleeding now beneath the mower's swathe,
But they will blow anon. There's not a house
Of mark in Scotland weeps not kindred blood
In that black tragedy. With wit to work it,
Here's mine will render gold.—For the great lords,
Their love is on the sour. The laws late passed,
At the king's instance, by the Three Estates
Nulling the jurisdiction they assumed
Over their vassals' lives, and those prohibit
Ranging the land with swarms of followers

In time of peace, o'ertax their means to keep,
Have so embittered them—

P. Gr. These acts methought
Thyself had counselled them.

Gr. The most inhibitive—
That touched the sorest on the quick, I drew it ;—
It sopped the Commons—writ me down a patriot—
Angered the Lords, and riped them for rebellion —
And here 's a godsend come as I had whistled for 't,
This tax and tallage reird.

P. Gr. The common sort
Will stick by him—

Gr. Will they ? Look from that window.

P. Gr. St. Andrew ! what a crowd !

Gr. With holiday faces
As they were boune for '*Peblis at the Play.*'
Do they not look so ?

P. Gr. No ! By my troth they do not !
Neither like holiday nor holiness ;
A more misruly, more misfavoured rabble
Swarmed from the filth of the back wynds and closes
I ne'er set eyes upon. There is a devil,
A starved and scowling devil in their look ;
They 're ripe for anything.

Gr. So much the better ;
They 're just the friends we need : Go mix with them ;
They 're hieing hot-foot to the Parliament
To beard their tax-masters. Thou 'rt new from France, —
No man will know thee. Blow their humour bravely
'Gainst this new-fangled king is come from England,

This feasting, fiddling, tax, and tallage king—
Lauding perwhiles, and for parenthesis,
Walter of Athole, and Sir Robert Græme,
True Scots and patriots, would as liefly look
For down on hogs or knots in bulrushes
As good in aught is kendled south the Border.
Away, and show what word-wit thou hast learned
From thy French schooling, by the proof of act;
For, punctual to his tryste, here comes Earl Walter,
Feeding on freits and fortunes in the clouds,
He dares but hint in circumloquitur. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Second.

ANOTHER APARTMENT IN THE SAME.

(*Enter, in conversation, the* EARL OF ATHOLE *and* SIR ROBERT GRÆME.)

Græme. Kings have long hands, my lord. 'Tis a strong measure
This our liege lord requireth of his Parliament:—
But then he knows we 've loyal consciences
And melting bowels to a royal wooer;—
This castle-seizing, and this swapping earldoms
Without the owner's leave! Marry, his Grace
Doth make a shrewd excamb—Buchan for March,
Heather for corn, and tods and ptarmigans

For beeves and fat kain hens! But the Earl of March—
I crave his pardon, the new Earl of Buchan—
How doth it relish him?

Athole. Humph! He must swallow it.
Digest it how he may—

Gr. Now, by St. Bathan!
Were I Dunbar, liever than yield me rood
Of that brave heritage his fathers owned,
In the broad bounds of Merse, from Bass to Berwick,
The rich green holms of Leader, Tweed, and Teviot,
For the black moors of Buchan,—

Athole. —Sooth, the Earl
Swears in his mood by every saint he wots of,
Were he once more within his own good castle,
He would defy both king and Parliament
To fetch him out again! They 'd find it game
Like hopeless, as my Lord of Salisbury did,
To oust his stout old grandame from her cover,
Black Agnes of Dunbar, the Southron's sow,
Made farrow suddenly, and shot her love-shafts
Right to the English heart.

Gr. 'Tis bravely spoken,
So he will stand to it. How say our Lords?
Spy they not here a writing on the wall,
Prophetic to themselves?

Athole. They chafe at it.

Gr. And for the cogent cause—the oft defection
O' the House of March, whereto near neighbourhood
Did much encourage, to the English side—
How say they to this reason for transporting them

To-north temptation, moating Forth and Tay
Betwixt the devil and them?

Athole. They count it cloak
Too scant to screen the shame of robbery.

Gr. And these new-fangled acts against the baronage—
And this instalment of the royal ransom—
How do they brook all this?

Athole. So much impatiently,
They have appealed me earnestly, as next
The throne in blood, to publicly protest
This day against them all, as acts o'erpass
The royal privilege, with word and weapon,
Binding themselves to stand by me.

Gr. The which
Thou 'lt do, past doubt, my lord.

Athole. I have declined it.

Gr. Hast thou, my lord?

Athole. My nephew 's hot in blood—

Gr. But with this warrandice—

Athole. And then thou knowest
The Earldom of Stratherne—

Gr. (*aside.*) —Ay, there he sopped thee.

Athole. —That royal appanage, when it was found,
Thy nephew, Malise Græme could not retain it,
As, though descended from the royal stock,
'Twas by his mother's side— (*Walks to the window, looking out and listening.*)

Gr. (*aside.*) That stolen meat
Hath glued thy glutton's lips.

Athole. —To me he passed it,

Gifting thy brother's son, for lieu thereof,
The Earldom of Monteith.

Gr. But mark, my lord,
'Tis given thee but for life. No blood of thine
Inherits aft[illegible] sinks, engulfed
Into that bog is bottomless, the Crown.
And when thy nephew died, my Lord of Mar,
His princely heritage was thine of right,
He clutched it all himself.

Athole. He did that foully.

(*Again walks to the window, looks out, and listens.*)

Gr. What spectacle, my lord, invites thee so?

(*Goes to the window.*)

A marvellous crowd! Oh, 'tis the blind old minstrel,
Halbert of Haddington. He draweth audience,
Fuller and firmlier tethered by the ear,
Than e'er a preaching friar o' them all.
Who texts his theme to-day?

Athole. Thomas of Erceldoune.

Gr. Then 'tis some sedging tale—Sir Tristrem, may be—

Athole. Nay, but his prophecies. Is it not strange,—
Thou dost not think them sooth?

Gr. Of prophecies
Time is assayer and interpreter,
And with his sieve he sifts, unerringly,
The false ones from the true.

Athole. But Erceldoune's—
True Thomas is the name they 've purchased him,
So perfectly he hit the happenings.

The sudden death of our Third Alexander,
Killed from his horse, at Kinghorn, he foretold it
The day before it fell.

Gr. Ay, at Dunbar,
To th' Earl of March, the very hour o' the day, too,
When that black tempest should blow over Scotland.

Athole. And when the corpse of Wallace, counted dead,
Was, by his English jailors, forth the window
Flung on a dunghill, in the town of Ayr,
Thence by his nurse, removed for stolen burial—
The man was sent with tidings to the Faile,
Where Thomas lodged—

Gr. —He laughed his news to scorn,—
Pledging his verity, his life thereto,
That ere he died, was then accounted dead,
Should thousands many die, on bloody field,
That he should sweep the English forth the land,
And thrice for Scotland conquer peace in arms.

Athole. And so it all fell out.

Gr. Touching thine ancestor—
The Bruce, was then a babe—he prophesied :
'He rocks in cradle, there, shall wear a crown,
And have all Scotland in his royal leading.'

Athole. He did. 'Twas strange. And there be things as strange
Yet unaccomplished. Thou hast heard o' them—?

Gr. There 's one remembers me.—That a king's son,
Of Bruce's blood, and brother of a king,
Whose son shall die an hostage for a king,
At his own dying shall have on a crown.

Athole. Now, by St. Bede! it is that prophecy
The blind old man is rhyming through the streets.

Gr. Indeed! He 's bold: minstrels claim privilege,
And blind old Halbert is a favourite.
Yet there 's a prophecy even he will not
Venture repeating it.

Athole. Of Erceldoune's?

Gr. That prophesies this very year of grace,
Fixing 't by marks as clear definitive
As it were written in the Almanack,
There shall a king be done to dead in Scotland.

Athole. Nay, by my faith, even that same prophecy.
He did rehearse it too!

Gr. Should the king hear of it?

Athole. He doth but laugh at them; names them for mockery,
Heraldic amphibologies, swearing he hath
More faith in Tristrem and his wondrous hounds,
Hodain and Pettierewe, that Thomas sings of,
Than all his pack of Pythian parables—
The selcouth sights he saw in lift and lee,
Lions and libbards, foumarts, mouldiewarps,—
A dozen Daniels had not construed them.

(GRÆME *shakes his head distrustingly.*)

Thou seem'st not of his mind—

Gr. Be 't gift or guess,
The Rhymer's prophecies have fallen so true,
So without fail, that till this year be out—

Athole. Then thou wilt fright me with that prophecy
They have in Athole—

Gr. With what prophecy?

Athole. Touching our house. There's not a dame in Athole
But holds 't as Holy Writ—rhyming 't o' nights
For music to her distaff. Some say Erceldoune
Himself 'twas uttered it. O' the wiser sort,
I do remember in my boyhood's time,
There were did mock at it; but strange attesting
It hath received since then.

Gr. How says 't, my lord?

Athole. 'In Athole's bounds betide man-child is born,
Hath fingers six, and cow with triple horn,
Last of his name and worst, let Athole's heir
That child man grown avoid to counter where
Two rivers join—for meet they at that ford,
No Athole-Stewart shall be Athole's lord.'[1]

Gr. But this six-fingered brat, this three-horned heifer,
Were never monstered of the same year's calving.

Athole. Ay, and in Athole too—

Gr. And do they live?

Athole. Chafed by their chanting that eternal rhyme,
And crowds came wondering at the monster-beast,

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[1] As restricted to the Athole-Stewarts, this prophecy was fulfilled. After the murder of James I., his Queen married another James Stewart, a younger son of the Lord of Lorn, and their eldest son was, by James II., created Earl of Athole. The large possessions, however, which had appertained to the title, were subdivided and much reduced. Portions of them were conferred on those who had been most active in the capture of Graeme and his fellow-conspirators, as on Duncanson (the progenitor of the Robertsons of Strowan) and others. 'Atholiæ comitatum habuit,' says Major of the new Earl, 'mutilatum tamen.'

My grandson, Robert Stewart, in his heat,
Slew 't as he came from hunting, with his spear.

Gr. And the man-monster?

Athole. Would have slain him too—
For he had crossed him oft; once, in particular,
Rescuing by main reprise a fair young wench,
My grandson, in his boil of youthful blood,
Maugre her leave would make his bed-fellow.
We hunted him through Athole; but he foiled us—
And 'twas reported he had passed the sea,
To join the wars in France.

Gr. Where questionless,
To prove the prophecy but beldame's gospel,
Belched by some jongler in his drunken dwalm,
He perished in the ruin overswept,
The remnant of that once so goodly band
Followed the Douglas, and thy gallant nephew
The Constable of France.

Athole. Nay, 'tis reported me,
Within this week he hath been seen in Athole.

(*Bell sounds in the distance.*)

Gr. There sounds our summons to the Parliament.
Of all our baronage is none will venture
The task thou hast declined?

Athole. To publicly protest
Against the royal acts? Not one.

Gr. Didst thou mistrust them—
Would they not stand by thee?

Athole. They would, I doubt not.

Gr. And were there one so bold to peril it,
Would they uphold him, think'st thou?
Athole. To a man.
They are so much mispleased touching this matter,
In heart so much at one, they do but lack
A mouth and mover in 't.
Gr. Then make we haste,
I fain would speak them ere th' Estates are met.
Athole (*going to the window*).
Again that antient chime! Is it not strange!
'Whose son shall die an hostage for a king,
Himself at dying shall have on a crown!' [*Exeunt.*

Scene Third.

A NARROW STREET NEAR THE PARLIAMENT-HOUSE.

(*A great Mob gathered round* PATRICK GRÆME, *who has been addressing them.*)

1 *Mob.* The king's own uncle and Sir Robert Græme,
So mighty in the law, our pleaders, saidst thou?
My certie! it 's brave news. Since the black day
When they took off the good Duke Murdac's head,
I have not heard the like.
But are they stanch?
Lovers of Scotland—traist friends to the people,
As good Duke Murdac was?
P. Græme. I 've heard them say 't,
Were their familiars, liefer than sleep

Under an English blanket, they would roll
Their rachan round them on a drift of snow
And make their bolster of a boulder stone!
They will not hunt with hound, nor hawk with falcon,
So they be well avised concerning it,
That it was whelped or fledged to south the Border.

2 *Mob.* Nay, an' they hate our neighbours all so deadly,
They 're Christian men, past doubt, and honest patriots.

(ATHOLE *and* GRÆME *pass rapidly in the background on their way to the meeting of the Estates.*)

P. Græme. And, by St. Giles! the very men we spake of,
My Lord of Athole and Sir Robert Græme –
A cheer for them!—(*the mob huzza*)—Now let us after them,
To the Parliament; and while they plead for us
Against those traitor lords would fleece poor Scotland
To buy us back an Englishman for king,
Raise we a shout shall make old Arthur's rock
Dirl to the back-bone, and arede these lords,
These tax and tallage lords, that we are legion.
Come, follow me, my friends.

[*Exit* PATRICK GRÆME, *followed by Mob.*

Morag,—the Spaewife of Lochaber, who has been in the crowd, remains looking after them.

Ay, follow him,
Ye rowting raff of nowte and neer-do-weels,
And a black gate he 'll lead you. Ho, young cock!
Thy roost right weel I ken it by thy crawing.
Ay, and the auld cock learned thee that braw sang!
Bravely wots Morag what is in the wind,

And she will watch and watch, and ward and warn
The bonny king. Love-service for love-service ! [*Exit.*

Scene Fourth.

THE HALL OF PARLIAMENT.

(*The Estates are met, the* KING *presiding.* SIR ROBERT GRÆME *is on his legs, as if he had just done addressing the* KING.)

King. In name of the Estates of Parliament !
Gr. My Liege, I speak their mind.
King. Is 't so, my Lords ? (*They bow assent.*)
Beshrew me, then, there 's none can charge your oracle
That it doth Philippize. Hard things and harsh
Sir Robert Græme hath spoke against your king,
Raking my reign for text of obloquy
Beside the present cause, which, as I understand it,
Is not an inquest on my life and laws,
But simply question touching an instalment
Of certain moneys to the King of England,
Due for my maintenance—
Gr. Thy restitution
From forced captivity in breach of truce
And a false pirate's grip—robbing poor Scotland
To gorge his coffers are too full already.
King. Say that the seizing Sinclair and myself
At Flamborough, maugre our eight years' truce,

By the Fourth Henry, was unkingly done,
An act of piracy—I'll not gainsay it.
Cry shame thereon, and I will echo thee—
Still must our debt be paid. The faith of Scotland
Is pledged to it. For dowry of my Queen
They have abated much—part is paid down.
And for the residue there lie impledged
Many our noblest youths and worthiest
In the Sixth Henry's keep. My noble cousin,
Lord Athole's heir, died in the Tower in London,
Our hostage unredeemed. Must Crawford, too,
Must Gordon, Oliphant, and Ogilvie,
Thy nephew Malise, Ruthven, Lyon, Moubray,
All in their English dungeon, rot unransomed,
Have pawned their bodies for the faith of Scotland?

Gr. It needeth not—albeit our nation's poor,
And all unbroke to bear these heavy burdens;—
For in thy kinsman's time, the Albanies,
There was no tax imposed. For peer and people
That was a blessed time! The poor man then
Looked on the increase of his flocks and fields
As blessing, not as curse. His garners filled
Untaxed, his cattle multiplied—

King. And then
Some Angus Murray, or some Angus Duff,
Macdonald, or Macarthur, or Macrore,
Came with a tail of Redshanks from the hills,
And swept them hoof and horn! And when the widow,
The wretched widow they had robbed of all,
Sobbed out her curse on them, her naked feet

They shod with iron, and with savage glee
Bade post to court and tell her friend the Regent!
Right arm made right—law was but privilege:—
The poor man was a serf—his lord might hang him,
For cause or none, over his castle's gate,
As he might hang his hound! To kirk and market
A man went furnished as to battle-field,—
And he who journeyed twenty mile from home
Shrived ere he went, and made his testament!
I found it so, and booked my vow in heaven,
Though I should lead me a dog's life, or die
A dog's death, mending it, this should not last—
Never to slack me till, throughout broad Scotland,
At mid-day or mid-night, the castle's key
Should keep the castle, and the bush the cow!
Have I not kept mine oath? Who sows the seed
Now reaps the grain; the herd is his who rears it;
Lording and loon hath but one law and knows it;
And thou may'st journey from the Brig of Berwick
To Beauly's Firth with but thy staff to keep thee!
That untaxed time, that golden age of Albany,
It was a blessed time—for thieves and robbers!
Better is 't not to give the petty fee
Upholds the law, that doth uphold the whole?
Gr. Less bloody was the license of that time
Than is the law profest its remedy.—
Under the gentle rule of Albany,
In twenty years, by heading or by hanging,
Scarce were there fifty died. In two years' time
This boasted law cut off a fifteen hundred—

King. Robbers and thieves—would in two years have slain
Their fifteen thousands—

Gr. In this fifteen hundred,
Perished Duke Murdac and the house of Albany,—
The Earl of Lennox—were they thieves and robbers?
Was that their libel?

King. Ask these friends, are round thee—
The Earls of Athole, Douglas, Angus, Orkney,
The Lords of Lorn, Dalkeith, Montgomery,
Sir Gilbert Hay the Constable of Scotland,
Sir Walter Ogilvie, and others there
Who were their judges and their sentencers.

Gr. The headsman's axe on Stirling's bloody knoll
That lopped themselves, laid not their forests low,
Their stately castles, or their fruitful farms,
In the wide bounds of Fife, Menteith, and Lennox—
These rich revenues once they answered all,
And left the lieges free.

King. They were the Crown's,
And to the Crown are fallen by forfeiture—
A king's necessities are much and many.

Gr. If troops of English scullions be necessities,—
If masquers, minstrels, quaint artificers,
Quiristers, limners, be necessities,
If columns charactered with rich devices
In sumptuous palaces,—if orchards bowered
With every plant of fragrance or of fruit,
If trellised gardens, flowery terraces,
If parks for pleasure—

King. And they are necessities

To soften a rude age. If the Fourth Henry
Unkingly seized me and in breach of truce,
Nobly he reared, whom wrongly he detained,
Schooling me duly in each gentle art
Might grace a knight, a monarch, or a man.
And, so that Heaven do but accord me life,
And treason leisure to achieve my hope,
I will engraft upon our rougher rind
The fair humanities he taught my youth.

Gr. And fleece thy people and escheat thy nobles
To fat a flock of foreign cormorants,
Of cooks, and choristers, and ballad-makers.
They 've swallowed Fife, Menteith, the Levenax,
And Mar already. Ross and the West Isles
Are in their glutton's gorge. My Lord of March
Hath a rich earldom—hence 'tis found the son
Sinned in the sire, and he must render it!
Whose turn is next? My Lord of Athole there,
My Lord of Douglas, they have brave domains,
And so they must produce their chartulars :—
And be there dot awanting or awry,
They forfeit to the Crown—a muscle's quake
Hath nulled their virtue and validity!
Scotland, that scorned to stoop a vassal neck
To England's Edward with his hundred thousands,
Will brook no English king upon her throne—
Will brook no English minions in her court—
Will brook no English manners in her halls—
Will brook no English tribute on her lands,—
All these thou hast imposed.

Orkney to Angus (*aside*). Now brimstone broil him,
We did not warrant that.

Gr. Sir James of Scotland!
For that in breach thy bond and crowning oath,
To 'keep, defend, and govern ilk estate
After the law and customs of the realm,
Nought there-against to alter, eik, or minish,
But with consent of the Estates'—thou hast,
Listening to foreign minions and miscounsel,
Our wholesome, antient, home-born usages,
For light imported fopperies annulled,
And wasteful luxuries, for charge thereof
Grinding thy commons, forfeiting thy nobles,
And by the gibbet or the headsman's block,
Ending on trumped and tyrannous pretext,
The true-born line and issue of our kings—
(*Going up to the* KING *and laying his hand on his shoulder*)
As a devourer of thy people's wealth,
As a destroyer of thy people's rights,
I do, in name of the Estates of Parliament,
Arrest thee here to answer their arraign!
(*Turning to the Lords of Parliament.*)
Is it not so, my Lords, as I have said?

(*All remain silent, the greater number exchanging looks of astonishment and indignation.*)

King. (*After regarding the Assembly for some time steadily and with dignity*)—
Is 't so, indeed? Hath he spoke warranted?
Vouch ye to this for likeness of your king?
If so, 'tis bold; if not, he hath done treason.

Orkney. We gave no warrant to 't, nor weeting neither
This his misloyal and mismannered speech.

King. Hath he in presence none doth second him?

(*They are silent.*)

I 'm glad there 's but a solitary traitor,
And he not one is new or unsuspect;
It saves me spend of ire or argument——
A second would have chafed and troubled me.

(*To* SIR ROBERT STEWART, *his Chamberlain*)

To-day, by promise to thy noble grandsire,
I boune me to the north for gallant sport,
To hunt the wild bull in the Athole woods;
Good cousin, pray thee, for thy prisoner
Look to this traitor; lodge him in the Castle,
In the sure keeping of Sir William Crichton;
And (*rising*) till we meet at Perth in Parliament,
Adjourn we question of his punishment
And of King Henry's claim. [*Exit, followed by Lords.*

Gr. So fares the fool
Trusteth the windy warrant of a crowd!

(*Aside, as* SIR ROBERT STEWART *advances with a guard to take him into custody.*)

Now Patrick with his piebalds to the rescue!
Or I 've o'ershot my mark.

[*Exit guarded; a tumult, and loud shouting heard without, clashing of arms, and cries of 'A Græme! a Græme!' 'To the rescue!' etc.*

Scene Fifth.

THE PIER AT LEITH.

(*Enter the* KING *as in conversation with* SIR ROBERT STEWART, *and followed by* SIR ANDREW GRAY *and* SIR DAVID DUNBAR.)

King. Fye, take 't not so to heart, my gentle cousin,
Thou hast no blame in this.
Stewart. That blow so stunned me,
My senses reeled and left me, for what time
Sufficed that rascal mob—
King. Nay, with their numbers,
And thy so slender guard—(*looking out*)—what hubbub 's here?
(*Enter* SIR HERBERT MAXWELL.)
A second rising of the Cowgate, Maxwell?
Maxwell. 'Tis but the poor old spaewife of Lochaber,
Mad Morag, in her lunes, a mob of boys
And idlers teazing her.
King. See no one harms her,
Nor mocks her in her mood, nor troubles her.
[*Exeunt* STEWART *and* MAXWELL.
Sir Andrew Gray, what think'st thou of this sibyl?
Gray. Some count her mad, some a divineress—
Some say she visions with the second sight,
And some that stout potations put the spirit in her.
King. But for thyself, which is the cause potential?
Gray. Any may serve, or all be confluent.

King (*musingly, and as if to himself*).
Her tale so true, and yet her cause of knowledge
So wild, fantastical!

Gray. What speaks your Grace of?
Methought you laughed at both her trade and tribe,
These fate-and-fortune-spellers in the clouds,
Prophets in trance, and bedlams when they waken.

King. And so I do; and yet, last autumn 'twas
This woman made me quit the siege of Roxburgh,
My gallant host disbanding suddenly,
Some think ingloriously, when one short week
Had made that strength mine own. Thou 'rt not o' them
Have ruled that act caprice or cowardice.

Gray. For that I know it strangled in the nest
A black conspiracy. But 'twas the Queen,
Methought, discovered it.

King. This woman haunted her,
Crossing her path whene'er she went abroad,
With riddling rhymes and quaint indicatives,
'Tokened a danger and a deadly plot,
And darkly its wherefrom. Sir Robert Lauder,
At my wife's instance, searched the matter out,
And found the beldame's visions, verities.
With haste the Queen rode to my camp at Marchmont;
Another week and she had come too late.

(*A tumult without. Enter* MORAG *struggling with* SIR ROBERT STEWART, *who is attempting to keep her back.*)

Morag (*to* SIR ROBERT STEWART).
Off! Off! thou bloody whelp of bloody hound!

Thou made the keeper of the royal fold!
Woe to the shepherd sleeps when thou art watcher!
The wolf is on the wold. Who let him there?
Where 's the old fox? Stole to the moor to meet
The wolf and wolf's cub at the murder-cairn!

King (*to* SIR ROBERT STEWART).

Nay, good my cousin, let her have her way.
Hinder her not. She 's earned her privilege.

Morag (*wildly, and as if to herself*).

In that year, when wine and ale,
Frozen in their icy pail,
By the piece are weighed in sale;—
In that year, when the *Black Hour*
Falls on Scotland, tarn and tower,
Shall be slain a king in bower!

(*Placing herself betwixt the* KING *and the place of embarkation*)—

Turn back, Sir King! thou must not cross the sea:
Turn back, Sir King! thou art denied to pass.

King. And who denieth me, good woman?

Morag. **Houart.**

King. Houart!—and who is Houart?[1]

Morag. **He 's a king.**

King. There 's but one king in Scotland—that 's myself.

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[1] To the historians who record this incident in the life of King James, the name Houart (or Houthart), given by the Highland prophetess to her familiar spirit, has proved a puzzle. But is it not just the Gaelic *Tamet*, dixit (pronounced *Houart*), in other words, *the* [illegible], the most obvious form in which a supposed preternatural communion would be held, or preternatural communications received, by an insane visionary dwelling amid the solitudes of Lochaber?

This Houart must be a pretender-king—
Some Donald Balloch come alive again.

Morag (*laying her hand on the* KING'S *shoulder*).

Cross not the sea, James Stewart, King of Scotland—
James Stewart, King of Scotland, I debar thee!

(*The* KING, *by his gestures, showing some impatience, she drops on her knee.*)

Beseech thee do not pass—for an' thou do—

King. What then?—

Morag. (*Rising, and with solemnity.*)

Back on the 'live thou never shalt return!

King. Nay, nay, good woman, I have crossed this ferry
And back an hundred times but skaith, and shall,
I nothing doubt me, with the help of Heaven,
Do it as oft again.

(*Enter* WALTER STRATOUN.)

Stratoun. The Queen 's embarked,
And waits your Highness.

Morag (*earnestly*). It was Houart sent me—
Wilt thou not hearkto Houart?—

King. Not now, Morag.
My bark 's afloat, her shrouds are shaken free,
The flood 's at full, the wind is blowing fair,
And the Queen waits.

Morag. (*Sorrowfully and as to herself.*)
If he do cross that ferry,
Back on the 'live he never shall return.

King. (*Aside to* STEWART *and* GRAY.)
It was this Houart, as she said, advised her
Of that conspiracy. Pray ye, discover me,

If he be made of other stuff than moonshine,
That we may deal with him.

[*Exeunt the* KING *with his attendants, except* STEWART *and* GRAY.

Stewart. (*to Morag, who mutters something to herself without seeming to regard him.*)

Where is King Houart?
Why comes he not himself? Where bideth he?
His royal palace is a heather-bothy
Shrouded in mist, and pestilent with reek
Among the mountains of Lochaber—is 't not?
Thy devil would play dummy, witch! would he?
Yonder 's, I trow, will loose his tongue—the jougs!
And eggs and urchins we shall find a plenty
To pelt the Highland witch—where wons this Houart?

Morag. (*Regarding him sternly.*)

Sir Robert Stewart 'last and worst'—ay, worst—
His sib and his familiar, fye!—But he
Hath his weird too—for, 'meet they at that ford,
No Athole-Stewart shall be Athole's lord.'

Stewart. (*Shaking her fiercely.*)

So thou hast learned that Rannoch rant too, hast thou.
Thou curst colloguer with the devil?

Gray. Nay,
His Grace enjoined us to deal gently with her.
Wilt thou not tell me, my good Morag, now,
Where Houart is? I love King James's life,
And fain would speech with him. Where's Houart, pray thee?

Morag. Seest yon black cloud is sailing to the North,
For convoy to the king?

Gray. I see a cloud—

Morag. Houart is riding on 't. Dost thou not see him?

Gray. I cannot swear I do; but that may be
My lack of clairvoyance. Is that his home?
Hath he no other dwelling-place?

Morag (wildly.) A thousand—
Where burns run brattling through the summer shaws
From linns and water-loups he sings to me:
And the brave mountain-heads he loves them dearly,—
It is the throne he sits on: the grey mist
That is his bed of state; from out its curtains,
He says good-morrow to his fere, the sun,
And holds blythe parle with me. And when, o' nights,
I journey the black moor, he'll bid the moon
Hang out her bonny bonet from the clouds,
Or come himself whizz like a shooting star,
And sit like Spunkie, swith on my left shoulder,
To light me through the quags and weary mosses,
Whispering brave things to me! Sometimes he sends
His kingly bidding by the lady owl,—
And brawly can I read her bonny sang.
And, when the clouds are skurrying through the sky,
And strong winds warsling with the angry oaks,
And drift leaves dancing through the tattered woods,
That is our trysting-time. Then hand in hand,
The lee-lang day, we thunder through the wood,
And Houart shouts, and laughs, and talks with me.—
'Tis that hath made me wise! This day he showed me

The wolf's cub in that crowd was slavering them,
Till they fell downright mad. The old wolf and the fox
Slunk slyly from their den, and when they passed,
I spake to Houart, and he sent me, but—

Flies will buzz, and finches sing,
And leeches soak, and adders sting;

And so,

In that year, when the Black Hour
Falls on Scotland, tarn and tower,
Shall be slain a king in bower!

(*Rushes out in repeating these lines.*)

Stewart. What think'st thou of the king's wise woman now?—

Gray. Humph, 'twere more tickle task to catch this Houart,
Than Donald Balloch, in a Badenoch moss.
Yet, there seems straggling through her ecstasy
A ray of meaning, could my duller sense
But take it in. Be 't drink or divination,
Or simple lunacy, I cannot tell;
I am Sir Andrew, not Sir Œdipus,
What says my king of Thebes?

Stewart. That she's a cheat,
Her lunes are mummery, her prophecies
A juggler's oracles to frighten fools,
And catch them in her net. Were I her deemster,
The horse-pond or the jougs should be her guerdon:
So, I 'll report the king.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

Scene First.

ATHOLE—A NARROW PASS IN THE WOOD AT THE UPPER END OF KILLIECRANKIE.

(*Enter from opposite sides* SIR ROBERT STEWART *and* WALTER LUVALE.)

Stewart. Fellow, begone! What dost thou skulking here?
Tarry but one day longer in these bounds,
There's not a jungle in the Athole woods,
There's not a tod's-hole, nor a wild-cat's den,
From Birnam-braes to Rannoch thou dost hide in,
Shall save thee from my search and from my sword.

Luvale. I give thee back the *fellow.* For the rest
Thou need'st no search for me. Thou hast thy sword,
And here I stand before thee. Face to face,
And foot to foot, the firm sward under us,
And Heaven above us, for the on-looker,
Robert of Athole, do thy worst!

Stewart. And tilt with thee!—
Thou misborn wretch, tilt with thy cope-fellows,
My hinds or hounds! thou art no mate for me.

Luvale. A belted knight is tilt-fellow for king.

Stewart. A belted knight! Who belted thee a knight?

Luvale. A brave man's arm, it boots not whose nor where;
But meet we where we may, on good green-sward,
In list or battle-field, thou meet'st thine equal—
A spurred and belted knight.

Stewart. A belted knight!
A belfry knight! old Bishop Cardyne's knight—
Some shaveling girded thee, for belt the cord
A begging brother wore! Begone, I say,
For if to-morrow thou be found in Athole,
By good St. Fillan and his holy well,
To a wolf's death I 'll hunt thee with my hounds.

[*Exit* STEWART.

Luvale (*solus*). Was ever wretch so worried for his life,
And for so simple cause! that in her haste,
Or in her freak, nature hath gifted me
This finger all too much. Despite my pains
To shun encounter with this frantic tyrant,
Despite forbearance, shown in other cause,
So persecution proof, from holy church
Had won confessor's crown, if I do linger
But one day longer here, I doubt this madman
Will drive me in defence to mortal quarrel,
And so force true his weird, turn freits to facts,
And rants of beldames into prophecy.

I 've saved the king; high Heaven be praised for that!
Although I dared not tarry for his thanks;
My nurse is safe, and my fair foster-sister;
So now to drop an orphan's filial tear
On my poor mother's grave, and the good bishop's,

Then Athole! and my native land, farewell
For ever, for the sunny fields of France,
Where Charles and fortune woo and welcome me! [*Exit.*

Scene Second.

LOGIERAIT, THE KING'S CASTLE ON THE RIGHT BANK OF THE TUMMEL, NEAR ITS JUNCTION WITH THE TAY—AN APARTMENT IN THE ROYAL RESIDENCE.

(*Enter the* QUEEN, *attended by* CATHERINE DOUGLAS, *and followed by* SIR HERBERT MAXWELL.)

Queen. Thank Heaven! thank Heaven! But hast thou told me all?
Hide nothing from me, good Sir Herbert! pray thee!
Is he not hurt?
Max. I've told your Highness true.—
On my pledged honour as a Christian knight,
The king's not hurt, though his escape in sooth
Showed like a miracle. But fearing rumour
Should, with uncertain tale, alarm your Highness,
He sped me on before.
Queen. O will he learn him never
Wisdom, though peril preach! Vainly I minded him
How once before, in Castlecary woods
His life was 'dangered by that horrid sport.
Thank Heaven! that savage breed is nigh extinct.
Max. Ah, madam! 'tis a glorious sport albeit,

And pastime for a king! A nobler prize
Ne'er started hunter from his forest lair!
Oh, had your Grace but seen that gallant brute
Come thundering in his might! white as the snow,—
All but his horns, seemed tipped with ebony,
His muzzle, and his crisp and curled mane,
Black as the raven's wing,—his brandished tail
Streaming like nightly pennon in a charge;
His smoking nostrils as a furnace glowed;—
His eyes two founts of fire! Forehead to earth,
Trenching long furrows in the mountain's side,
Headlong he dashed down hill! horsemen and foot,
Scattering to right and left; the shower of lances
Shaking like burdocks from his lusty flanks,—
Tossing the mangled dogs howling to heaven!—

Queen. Where was the King?

Max. By evil chance, far down
The narrow gullet of a forest lane
That had no passage thorough, jagged and jammed
With rocks on either side,—when the fell beast,
In full career rushed on him!—to the earth
Dashed his disbowelled steed—

Queen. Forbear, forbear!
It makes my brain run round.

Catherine Douglas. How was he saved, then?
Was it by mortal man?

Max. Madman, or angel,
I cannot tell me which. He came like lightning—
Like lightning vanished. I' the self-same instant
That savage brute impaled his Highness' steed,

Sprang a young hunter from the rock above
Sheer on the monster's back, and plunged his dagger
Behind his ear so deftly and so deep,
He dropped that moment on the ground stone-dead.

C. D. O the brave youth! I love him from my heart.

Queen. He was not slain, I hope?

Max. Nor hurt, I think;
But sooth I scarce can tell, for though I stood
With my Lord Athole and Sir Robert Stewart,
Not many paces from his Highness' side,
So swift he came, so suddenly he went,
I scarce, methinks, should know his face again.

Queen. I hope he will be found.

C. D. He shall be found,
Although Kate Douglas should transform to Dian,
A quivered huntress through the Athole woods,
Or scale the stony crest of Benyvracky,
On search for him. And be there stuff in him,
Whereout the king can manufacture knight—

Max. What then?

C. D. I do not know but I shall marry him.

Max. So be Sir Robert Stewart grant his leave.

C. D. With, or without thy leave or Robert Stewart's—

Queen. Nay, nay, dear Catherine! thou 'rt not wedded so,
Hast yet no wifely fears. Where is the King?

Max. I left him on return.

Queen. And who attends on him?

Max. Only Sir Andrew Gray. Your Grace doth know
How, with a poet's and a painter's worship,
He dearly loves to ramble, unattended,

That glorious pass of craig and cataract
And sylvan savagery. I 'm charged to meet him
And be his boatman at the Tummel's ferry.

Queen. O do not tarry, good Sir Herbert! There,
So unattended in that perilous pass!
Foolhardy James, thou wilt provoke thy fate.

Max. Nay, good your Highness, what hath he to fear
In Killiecrankie woods?

Queen. Sir Robert Græme.—
Dost thou not know that proud and desperate man
Hath his allegiance formally disowned,
And writ defiance to the king; and sworn
Where'er he meets with him, armed or unarmed,
Without defence of privilege, to slay him
As he would slay a beast?

Max. He will not risk
His outlaw's neck within the trap of Athole.
He 's at the King's horn openly for treason,
And there's a tempting ransom on his head,
Three thousand golden demies to the man
Dead or alive shall bring him to the King.

Queen. Oh, in that rank and ravelled wilderness
A desperate man for months might bide his time,
Then at the vantage spring upon his quarry,
And laugh pursuit to scorn. Sir Herbert, pray thee
Make haste to join the King!

Max. Since your Grace wills it,
Though full assured his safety needs it not.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Scene Third.

KILLIECRANKIE—THE NORTH, OR LEFT, BANK OF THE GARRY, NEAR THE UPPER EXTREMITY OF THE PASS—A DEEP, SECLUDED, AND ROMANTIC DELL, AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GLEN, OVERHUNG AND CLOSED IN BY WOODED PRECIPICES.

(*Enter* KING JAMES *and* SIR ANDREW GRAY, *the latter surveying the scene with admiration.*)

King (*after regarding Gray's gestures of wonder and delight for some time in silence*)—

There is the temple drew my steps aside
To play the pilgrim on our homeward way.
Is't not a shrine is worth the visiting?
'Tis said we rhymsters ever pass the true
In limning that we love, be our mood's idol
Dead thing or live, a landscape or a woman;
And hence, I fear, thou wilt not recognise
A spot hath often been described to thee.

Gray. It bursts on me as a remembered thing
I had seen shadowed in some glorious dream!
I ne'er have trode the Garry's glen before,
And yet methinks there's not a lichened ledge,
Altar, or obelisk, or quaint baptistery,
Or basin, rounded by the whirling wave,
Singing and smoothing on through centuries;—
There's not a precipice or splintered crag,
Nor oozy grotto, nor that stunt old oak,
All head and root, is clinging to the rock

As though it fed on stone ;—nor that mad torrent
That rusheth down, as shouting in its might,
Nor that black eddie pool doth swallow it,
But I could swear I'd seen them all before.

King. It is the dell I oft would tell thee of,
Home-sick and sad, in Windsor's kingly keep,
When, as we gazed upon the scene below—
How proud ! how fair ! yet how unlike to this !
Contrast would shoot my fancy on the wing
And waft thee with her to the Garry's glen !

Gray. It is the same ! I have it all by heart ;
There's not a tree but hangs a story by,
Or cave but peers one from. That queer old oak
I've seen it oft five hundred miles away !
I'll take mine oath to it, it is the same
Did save Lord David Stewart's life.

King. Methinks
It hath not grown an inch these twenty years,
Nor added wrinkle to its corded crust !
My cousin lost his footing near the top
Of that bluff precipice, scrambling his way
To a gled's eyrie, by some hazels grew,
In the loose shingle of the rotten rock,
And had been dashed a dead thing in that pool,
Shot from so fearful height, had not that tree
Midway the sheer descent entangled him ;—
My brother Rothsay cheered him from his perch,
To boldly leap into the linn below,
Where he swam, ready to defend his drowning.
He saved him ; but to die more lingering death.

In London's tower, mine hostage unredeemed!
And thou, his rescuer, high-minded boy!
Thou, bold and beautiful! whose fiery blood
Brooked not thy crafty, craven-hearted uncle
Should wield the sceptre of thy royal father,—
Poor Rothsay! better had it been for thee
That thou hadst made the Garry's linn thy grave,
Than live to dree, in Falkland's damned den,
That horrible death, while widowed poverty,
By stealth her beggar's dole of barley-meal
Dropped through the bars to thee! and gentle womanhood,
From her own bosom, scanting her little one,
Through the scooped reed dispensed the balmy stream,
To eik thy wretched life! Oh, hadst thou lived
Like him, thine age-fellow, England's fifth Harry,
The follies of thy fiery spirit purged,
Thou hadst to after times bequeathed a story
Had riched the poet's and the patriot's telling.
I have avenged thee, my poor murdered brother,
And turned our father's curse to prophecy
Upon thy murderers. Woe, the necessity
Was laid on me thereto!—Thy pardon, Gray,
This scene hath waked sad memories in me.
We'll talk of other things. Hast thou discovered
Nought of that youth so bravely saved my life?
Strange he should shun the thanking of a king,
For saving a king's life.

Gray. None seemed to know him,
So swift he came, so suddenly departed.
And yet methought—it might be fancy though—

He and Sir Robert Stewart bandied looks
Tokened a more of knowledge than of liking.

King. Some lifter may be of the Athole beeves,
Or intromitter with the Athole deer;
Would we could find him, though! What men are these?
Ha, Græme!—(*drawing his sword*)—the traitor Græme!
stand on defence.

(*Enter, their swords drawn,* SIR ROBERT GRÆME, PATRICK GRÆME, *and two armed followers.*)

Gr. Ay, Græme, the traitor! thy proclaimèd traitor,
Whose knightly scutcheon thou hast trampled on,
Fouling the well-spring of his children's blood!
The outlaw Græme, upon whose head thou 'st placed
Thy mark and murder-price! The wanderer Græme,
Whom thou hast robbed of house, home, heritage,
Turning his wife with all her little ones
To drift a barefoot beggar through the world!
The avenger Græme—the son-in-law of Lennox,
The brother-in-law of murdered Albany,
With all his wrongs red in his memory,
To whet his sword upon, hath come on thee,
Thou tyrant without peer or parallel!

King. Truly a gallant enemy, and a generous,
Brings four to foin with two!

Gr. Thou bloody tyrant!
We come not here to tilt in tournament,
Or knight with knight to play at chivalry.
I have disowned thee for my king—defied thee—
And redd thee of my bloody sacrament,

Attended, or alone, where'er I found thee,
On flood or field, in forest or in fane,
By onslaught or by ambushment, to slay thee
As I would slay a wolf. So thou art slain,
I reck not where or how! And here I have thee
Penned past escape.

King. In God's name! Gray, then,—
We've fought worse odds ere now. Remember Dreux,
Its blood-red rampart, and our doings there,
Won the Fifth Harry's praise! There is a rock,
Set thou thy back to it, as I to this—
My brother Rothsay played the hero here,
His gallant ghost shall not look down on cowards!

(*They engage;* GRÆME *and one of the followers falling on the* KING: PATRICK GRÆME *and the other on* GRAY. *The* KING *and* GRAY *shout for war-cry,* 'ROTHSAY! ROTHSAY!' *their assailants,* 'ALBANY! ALBANY!')

(*Enter hastily from the wood, his sword drawn,* WALTER LUVALE.)

Luvale. A war-cry shouted, and the clash of arms!
Good Heaven! the King. St. Andrew to the rescue!

(*Places himself at the* KING'S *side, and kills the fellow who is attacking him, as* GRAY *does the other. On observing which,* SIR ROBERT GRÆME *and his* SON *make their escape into the wood.*)

Villains! ye shall not 'scape.

King (*seizing his arm*). Nay, I command thee.

Pursuit were vain through Killiecrankie woods,
And perilous besides. Thou 'rt bleeding, Gray,
I fear they hurt thee home.

Gray. A scratch—no more.
I pray your Highness have escaped as lightly.

King. I am skin-whole. It had not long been so, though,
But for our friend at need. The knaves were stout,
And played their weapons well. Is it not strange,
Twice on one day my life should have been rescued,
As 'twere by miracle!

Gray. By the same arm, too,
Or I mistake me.

King. Ha!

Gray. How livingly
His countenance brings back that scene to me!
As with his knife unsheathed I saw him dart
Like arrow down the rock, and heard the groan
The monster heaved; and the next moment spied him
Upon his perch again! wherefrom he gazed
An anxious instant, as to make him sure
Your Grace was safe, then, like a streak of mist
Melts on a summer's morn, even in the looking at,
Evanished from my sight!

King (*cordially grasping Luvale's hand*).
Brave youth! hast twice
Been my good angel on this day—to find thee
Is worth the risk we run. But why didst thou
Not tarry to receive the thanks I owed thee?

Luvale. For that, my liege! no thanks were due to me;

I did me nothing but with the like 'vantage
Any leal subject in thy realm had done.

King. But thou didst vanish as it were a deed
It shamed thee to have done. Thou hadst no enemy
Dangered thy stay?

Luvale. There 's one doth make my tarrying
In Athole perilous.

King. And who is he?

Luvale. I pray thee, good my liege! to pardon me.—
My quarrels are not worth the ear of kings.
By stealth I came to Athole, and by stealth
I meant to pass away. Your Grace's leave.
That I may now depart.

King. Nay, stay, I charge thee.
Twice thou hast saved the King of Scotland's life;—
Lives there in Athole who shall dare to show,
Or dare to say he is thine enemy?

(*Luvale shakes his head distrustingly.*)

I know Earl Walter, my good uncle, is
A jealous keeper of his forest deer,
Some wandering buck, perchance, on Benygloe
Thine arrow may have hit.

Luvale. Never, my liege;
I ne'er have been a stealer of the deer.

King. For youthful frolic thou hast joined a band
Of gillie-glasses from the Moray braes,
To drive a spreath of heifers from Strathgarry.

Luvale. The stouthrief robber, and the filching thief
I hold at equal scorn. I ne'er, my liege,
Have been a poacher or a cateran.

King. Thou 'rt young and hot in blood; how much thou art
A master of thy weapon I have seen;
In sudden brawl at fair or funeral,
Or trysted meeting with a clan at feud,
Thou 'st slain thy man,—his kin is rife in Athole,—
Or, thou hast heard that the First James of Scotland 's
An austere king, a putter-down and punisher
Of these brave old time usages,—a tyrant
'Heads his own kindred, spares not high-born ladies,
So they turn law-breakers, but sets perforce,
Like thrifty dames to ply the spinning-wheel,
For penance in Tantallon or Incheolm;—
Prisons proud lords, were island kings at home;—
Nails horses' shoes to heels of Highland loons;—
Hangs gentlemen of genealogy
On gibbets by the score at Inverness,
For lifting beeves, or harrying helpless widows,—
And other things most horrible to hear!
Hadst thou arrived but a few minutes sooner,
Thou 'dst heard his dittay and his deeds at large
All duly catalogued and charactered
By an authentic tongue. Thou think'st I am—

Luvale. A just and noble prince, whom but such evil-doers
None else have need to fear—wouldst curb by law,
A lawless race hath had no curb but will,
No bound to will but brute necessity!
From whom the humblest hath redress aggrieved,
The highest judgment on convicted wrong!
Were Scotland's nobles but like Scotland's noblest,

Then innocence might walk abroad unarmed,
And Athole would be safe as Holyrood!
I've done me nought needs make me fear the king.

King. A flatterer, too! i' faith thou 'rt courtier born,
And must to court. Doth he not gloze already,
As he had run his court apprenticing?

Gray. But that he 's mixed some handful of the true
Doth spoil its perfectness.

King. Forbids thy mystery
Disclosing of thy name?

Luvale. My liege, my name
Is Walter Luvale.

King. Luvale,—In this realm
It is a rare but a right worthy one,—
There have been brave men of thy name in Scotland:
Witness James Luvale fought so gallantly,
And fell at Harlaw, with the Ogilvies,
And the chief names of Angus, Mearns, and Mar,
In that so bloody but so glorious fight
Against the rebel Donald of the Isles—
Art thou of kin to him?

Luvale. He was my father.—

King. Thou hadst a brave man to thy father then.
Methought his race had perished with himself.

Luvale. His lands were harried and his castle burnt,
By that fierce Highland host. My mother 'scaped,
And with one sole attendant, by wild paths
Crossing the hills for refuge with her uncle,
Old Robert Cardyne, Bishop of Dunkeld,
In a lone hut amid the Athole mountains

Was ta'en in labour suddenly. It chanced
The shepherd's dame of that rude shieling nursed
Her babe some three weeks old; and while my mother
Balanced for weary months 'twixt life and death,
The kindly dame from her own bosom fed
My new-born life. Under the bishop's roof
Long two-and-twenty years we lived his guests,
His cherished children rather, till, for cause
It needs not tax the royal time with telling,
Some three years gone I left my native land
To seek my fortune in the wars of France,
Wherein at Baugè, and at Verneuil,—
So fatal to our Scottish chivalry,—
Mine uncle Thomas Luvale had achieved
An honourable name. Sir Patrick Ogilvie
Was made Lord Constable of Scots in France,
After Lord Darnley's death, for some slight service
Was pleased to knight me on the battle-field,
And so o'erblazoned me to the French King,
He 's named me captain in his Scottish Guards.

King. How art thou here, then?

Luvale. On brief leave obtained,
Over my mother's grave, and the good bishop's,
To drop a pious tear, and place my nurse
And foster-sister in some safe retreat,
I sailed from France in that ill-fated ship,
Was wrecked at Penmack on the Breton's coast,
Carried my friend, the builder of my fortune,
Sir Patrick Ogilvie.

King. Alas, poor Ogilvie!

Scotland doth weep his loss, and Scotland's king,
As of her bravest, wisest, worthiest.

Luvale. My duty done, I 'm hasting my return,
Lest it be over-due.

King. The Queen must see thee,
Else night nor day shall I have peace from her;
Nor will her missive to the Dauphiness,
Nor mine to Charles, and to my son-in-law,
The Dauphin Lewis, mar their bearer's fortune.

(*Enter* SIR HERBERT MAXWELL.)

Maxwell, thou here! This is not Tummel Ferry.

Max. Fearing some danger did way-lay your Highness,
The Queen commanded me.

King. The Queen 's a witch, then:
I 'll nail a horse-shoe to my chamber's door,
And stick a sprig of rowan in my bonnet.

Gray. Or, haply, her fast friend, the spaewife, taking
Her daily precognition of the clouds,
Has read our tussle there, in hieroglyphics.

King. Who was 't ordained all witches should be burned?
Was 't not old King Macbeth?

Gray. I think me not.
But he it was did pass the law ordains,
'Fules, minstrels, bards, and sic like idle folks,'
Be forced to learn some honest craft to live by,
Or yoked, like aivers, in the plough and harrows!

King. Ha! Ha! It was. But thou and I, remember,
Play we the bard, the minstrel, or the fool,—
As sooth, our ingine somewhat tempts to do—
Have the '*king's privilege.*' Thou didst omit

To cite that saving clause. I fear the Queen 's, though,
But a green witch :—she had not sent us Maxwell
To th' rescue, else, so late. But here 's thy substitute
Hath tumbled timely from the moon to us.—
A brave one, too. Know him—Sir William Luvale.
Now, homeward haste we, to relieve the Queen.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

Scene First.

ATHOLE—AN APARTMENT IN THE EARL'S RESIDENCE.

(*Enter* ATHOLE, *a scroll of parchment in his hand, which he has been reading.*)

Athole. Omens and oracles
Crowd rife and ripe on us! In divers places
I' the three months' frost, curdled to compact ice,
Their wine and ale were sold i' the solid piece!
In the mid month of June, at three o' the clock,
All over Scotland fell so pitchy darkness
By near an hour as 'twere midnight at Yule!
Strange things to chronicle—and stranger still
To chronicle foreseen!—(*musing*)—When these things fall—
How reads the prophecy?—'*That year in Scotland*
There shall be slain a king.' If they could prophesy
The signs so certainly, might they not also
The things to follow them? 'When a king's son
Of Bruce's blood, the brother of a king—'
My brothers Albany, Stratherne, or Buchan,
This much had fitted them.—But what comes after?

'Whose son shall dy an hostage for a king'—
That fits but only me; and he it fits
'Shall dying wear a crown.'—That cruel deed,
Young Rothsay's murder, for the house of Albany
Did seem to clear the way. For doing it,
The house of Albany o'ershadowed mine,
Hath perished, root and branch!
And now these prodigies,
So strange adversatives to nature's rule,
And yet so all foretold,—so timing, too,
With Græme's outlawry and sworn sacrament
Of deadly reckoning with his sentencer,
Outlawing his outlawer!—
Our title 's perfect. (*unfolding the scroll.*)
Græme shows it here in clear demonstrative
Of logic and of law. Elizabeth Mure
Was concubine, not queen. No mockery
Of marriage forms following my mother's death,
Could blanch of bastardy the brood begot
Outside of wedlock's pale.—In hiding Græme
There is no treason done. I do but shield
A life by gifted seers, in old-time oracles,
Foretyped Heaven's instrument, the Crown of Scotland
To rightly place on the true owner's head!
Græme is our star of hope—our destiny
Is webb'd with his. We stand or fall together.

[*Exit.*

Scene Second.

THE SAME—THE GLEN OF BRUAR—A WILD AND RETIRED SPOT NEAR GRÆME'S HIDING-PLACE.

(*Enter* SIR ROBERT STEWART *and* SIR ROBERT GRÆME *in conversation.*)

Græme. It marvelled me that thou his chamberlain
Tarriedst behind in Athole. But ha! ha!

Stewart. What moves thy merriment?

Gr. I was comparing
My blasted fortunes with this lucky upstart's
Thou hast been telling of—I, an earl's brother,
An outlaw in the woods, have a brock's hole
My bield and biding-place; he, from his muck-hill,
A butterfly at court!—wishing I carried
Finger or toe exceeds the complement
Since luck doth lacquey superfluity!

Stewart. That misbegotten wretch! where'er I turn,
Like toad or adder on my path, I find him.
Devils and oracles are leagued with him
To cross me every way. He must be crushed—
Till I have set my heel upon his head—
While he has life there is no life for me.

Gr. Not if ye meet at that forbidden ford
As 'tis most like ye shall. This Highland castle
The king affects it much. And well he may—
It sitteth royally; and near thereby
Two rivers join, the Tummel and the Tay.
But I forget; thou art an infidel,
A mocker of that faith.

Stewart. Strange things have fallen
To shake my scoffer's creed : that fearful wind
And that more fearful frost—the *Black Hour* next—
That monster on four legs, and this on two !
All uncouth things, old crones and Lollard leeches
Were burnt for heresy, foreprophesied,
Long ere they fell to pass ! I do believe
They have anointed him to weapon-proof ;
Given robe or ring transports him at his pleasure ;
Taught rhymes throw glamour o'er the sense of men,
And drinks and philtres witch the love of women.

Gr. Is he so much a favourite at court ?

Stewart. To be so checked and chidden and admonished
Before the whole court too ! who am his cousin—
In royal blood his equal.

Gr. Say his better.
He 's of the bastard blood, thou 'rt of the true.

Stewart. And for this monster-born, this eleemosynar,
This foundling of the moors.

Gr. Thou that wert held too
So most his favourite, all did resort to thee,
Had boon to beg or grace to supplicate.

Stewart. That star is set ; and yet I thought he loved me.

Gr. So did thy cousin Alexander Stewart,—
So did Earl George of March ; yet o' the sudden,
The one he slew, the other he hath beggared.
The cat at romps will frolic with his prisoner,
And pat the plaything he designs his dinner.
The Queen, is she caught too ?

Stewart. He is her chamberlain !

Gr. 'Tis prompt promotion!

Stewart. And when I alone
Refused hail-fellow! to this dunghill knight—
For Patrick Ogilvie, he says, had knighted him
Upon some foreign field—before them all
He made him kneel, and begged my sword, and strake him,
And bade him rise Sir Walter Luvale, knight,
And each knight there salute him as a brother!

Gr. And did ye do't?

Stewart. Dunbar, and Gray, and Maxwell,
Like true court-spaniels, licked his hands and fawned;
I on protest, as bidden by the king,
Did lightly touch't, as I would handle toad,
And the cursed sword had dubbed him knight, that instant
Shivered and flung away! I've craved me leave
To tarry some time here, but never purpose
Back to his court again.

Gr. Nay, nay, thou must
Back to the court, and soon. There's bideth there
A one that thou would'st slay, and one that I—
And both must die or neither. Nay, start not;
I say that both must die. If either live
Thou art a man walks doomed. If Luvale lives
Thou may'st forget that prophecy; he will not,
And hate will hasten weird. Or slay thou Luvale,
The king slays thee: nay, if he lives thou diest,
Be Luvale slain or no. That moment thou
Brakest thy sword as desecrated thing,
Thy death was written in his soul's dark chamber:—
When did he pardon an offence like that?

Nay, hadst thou done it not, he stands in danger,
Stands in his fence of fear. In the last Parliament
He made us swear allegiance to his Queen.
Men deemed it strange; but there was purpose in 't,
Ay, and deep policy.

Stewart. He doats so on her;
Was there aught else but that?

Gr. It was not that;
'Twas pre-installing her i' the regency;
For though he feigns to make his mirth thereat,
The prophecy that weirds him dead this year,
He inly doth believe, and trembles at it.
He knows thy grandsire's next his son by law,
In blood before him; that for hate men give him
That nickname the old Irish gave their Brian,
The *Tax and Tallage King.* He knows the nobles
For choice would have thee king. In this new minion,
And in this slight of purpose thrown on thee,
Methinks I read the opening of his play,
His tragedy of Albany, new cast
For the descendants of Euphemia Ross.

Stewart. He's not so jealous of our house, think'st thou?

Gr. My Lord of Athole would have had thee wed
One of the princesses, thy royal cousins:
Of kingly line, repute his favourite,
Why said he nay to that?

Stewart. Nay, I must clear him
In justice there. He knew my wishes in 't,
And that I loved elsewhere. The black fiend flay him,
He hath bewitched her too!

Gr. Fair Catherine Douglas?

Stewart. It mads me more than all: the scornful minx!
And for this miscreate—this brownie's bastard—
This monster bears the devil's own finger-mark!
But mine she shall be! ay, tho' King and Queen,
And monks and monsters, and the devil's dam,
Armed with old prophecies.—There are in Athole
Whate'er I dare devise, dare execute,
Were it to sack St. Johnstoun, or to burn
Old Abbot Oswald, and for funeral pile
His friar's rookery.

Gr. She shall be thine,
And a king's couch to bed her beauty too,
So thou art ruled by me. Persuade Earl Walter
Arm me three hundred of his trustiest followers,—
To steal a fair young maiden from the court,
Your gillies will account as brave a pastime
As lifting heifer from a lowland strath—
And more they need not know. Post thou to court,
And smooth thy brow, and play Sir Chamberlain
As gay as thou wert wont. The thing's decreed,
And with the end so are the instruments;—
Thou shalt have thy revenge—I shall have mine.—
And for the lady, she may be thy Queen,
Or concubine, as the Fourth Robert wills it.
I pray thee, move Earl Walter in this matter,
And well bethink ye that it cost the Bruce
A deadlier venture to achieve a crown,
Whereto he could not plead so clear a title!

[*Exeunt.*

Scene Third.

ANOTHER WILD SPOT IN THE SAME GLEN, CLOSE TO GRÆME'S HIDING-PLACE, NEAR THE LOWER FALL OF THE BRUAR.

(*Enter* GRÆME *and* CAHOUN.)

Græme. Ay, ay, I 'm sure o' them—I know my men ;
I 've thrown my anchor in a place will catch.
Old Athole 's half a fox, and half a fool ;
I 've crammed the fox with law, the fool with prophecy ;
He hath a double and a diligent stomach,
It will digest them both. For Robert Stewart,
He 'll back to court again. I have unhived
A swarm of hissing hornets in his brain,
Pride, envy, anger, vanity, and lust,
In deadly buzz ! and the queen-bee ambition,
Will teach them where to fix their mortal stings.
We 'll have revenge, Cahoun ! and with revenge,
Honours in Lammas flood !

Cahoun. These red-shanks, think'st thou
That we may trust to them ?

Gr. What Athole bids them
They 'll do, nor stand on why's, were it to burn
The Blackfriar's monastery, and roast the monks,
And sup the Abbot sodden into broo !
It needs not for the nonce, we strain obedience
To this high pressure-proof. They 'll think 'tis pastime,
What in their mountain-creed is held no sin,
And what indeed doth under-plot our play—
Snatching a winsome damsel from the court

For their young master to the braes of Fender
To be his lady love. Come to my den,
I 'll give thee letters for the Halls, the Chambers,
And others safely may be trusted to.—
I 've planned it all, time, place, and circumstance,
To the day, the hour, the minute, more imports
Each actor knows his play with perfectness. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Fourth.

KILLIECRANKIE.

(*A high and rugged range of rocks betwixt the Tummel and Garry, commanding a view of the pass in its whole length, as well as of the open country in the surrounding district. On one of the boldest peaks,* MORAG *discovered as if watching the motions of some one in the distance.*)

Morag. The henchman 's up the hill to John o' Lude—
Ho! ho! ho! ho! There 's one, two, three,
Duncan of Faskil, Farquhar of Fonab,
And now black John o' Lude. Ha, ha, old fox!
I rede, I rede, I rede. It 's not a bridal
When ye 're the bidden guests: no, nor a tinchel
To fank the silly deer! The hoodie-crow,
O bravely kens she that. When ye 're at the busking,
She 's at the singing; caw! caw! caw! she wots
There 's flesh meat i' the wind. Heigho! heigho!
But I'm forfairn with walking. I 'll go sleep.

Sleep, fye! fye! fye! no sleep. The wolf wons yonder,
And the wolf's cub. The old fox and his whelp,
They 're trysted to his feast. There 's blood i' the banquet,
And so I 'll watch, watch, watch! Houart commanded me,

And Houart is a spirit brave—
I charge thee tell me where
The wild wolf wons? I' the Bruar's cave
There is the wild wolf's lair.

* * * *

Three weary days o'er moss and moor,
The hose but and the shoon—
And when the day grew on the doure,
Our bouet was the moon.

He 'll not believe me. Yet thou camest from England
Hot-foot enough, Sir King! I warrant thee,
To kill these Albanies when I sent for thee.
They would not hang the hell-hounds, though I told them,
But called me mad, and hoo'd their hounds at me;
And in their banquet-hall I saw him sit
And feast, and laugh, the merriest man was there,
Who (*shuddering*).—But poor Morag 's dead – When it was
done,
Her body fell to pieces! Houart tells me
They cannot force the spirit nor defoul it.
And so he lent me this brave body, skims
Mountain and mere light as the falcon's feather,
And aughs at frost and fire, spotless and white
As the sky snow before it 's touched the earth.—
My poor old mother, and my father! hoo! (*Shuddering.*)

His hair was like the fine fine lint,
Is dusted o'er with snow;
The oaken staff on which he bent,
It grew in fair Glencoe!

'They 're wondrous old, and they 're a-cold,
That old man and his dame!'
And then they laughed, these revers bold,
So merrily i' their game.

They took them brand, and lowe! lowe! lowe!
The thatch it blazeth brave!
That old man and his dame, I trow,
Their hearth-stone is their grave.

And oh! was 't not a sight of pride,
These comely brothers three,
With sword in hand stretched side by side,
Stark on the bloody lea!

Their sisters twain,—
(*Covering her face with her hands.*)
My bonny, bonny sister!
Aye weeping, weeping, weeping! Well for thee
That thou canst weep! the lady rowan tree
Is growing on thy grave. I could not weep,
So hied me to the king. He hanged them all!
And these proud Albanies too—ha! ha! ha!
But now they 'll kill him next—that sly old fox,
The wild wolf and their cubs. So Houart tells me—
For

'In the year when the Black Hour
Falls on Scotland, tarn and tower,
Shall be slain a king in bower!'

He'll not believe me though ; heigho ! heigho !
But what o' that? love-service for love-service !
And so I 'll tell the Queen— (*Looking out.*)
Another bidden !
Ho ! ho ! Sir Henchman ! thou dost shank it bravely !
No hill 's too stay, no linn too deep for thee !
But I will show thee I can run an errand
As fast and far as thou—for Houart bade me
To watch, watch, watch—and then, ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !
For bonny St. Johnstoun, it 's down by the Tay ! [*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

Scene First.

PERTH—THE GARDENS OF THE BLACKFRIARS' MONASTERY SURROUNDED BY A LOW WALL, BETWIXT WHICH, AND THE OUTER (OR CITY) WALL, THERE IS A MOAT.

(*Enter* CATHERINE *and* ELIZABETH DOUGLAS, *the latter with a bow and arrow in her hand, accompanied by* GRAY, MAXWELL, *and* LUVALE.)

Eliz. No doubt ye would—that is, ye 'd promise it—
For so requires your courtier's catechism—
Or shoot me midges, or ride after wild geese
From John o'Groat's to Greenland, if I bade ye!
But I 'm too learned i' the court Sanscrit, sirs;
Your Hellesponts, and Alps, and Apennines,
And polar snows, and sands of Africa,
I can translate them to the laic tongue.
Gray. And how, fair Brahmin! reads our Sanscrit, pray thee,
Done to the vulgate and vernacular?
Eliz. Ye 'll swim the Hellespont; that is, so be
No pond or ditch is near, is deep enough

To float the fat Leander of the herd
Would seek his Hero on its farther side,
To put your vaunting to the water-proof.
  Ye 'll scale me rock so perpendicular high
The wild cat shies it; and the breeding eagle
In doubt of the vertigo dares not build on 't,—
That is, so ye be stationed on plain ground
Whence may be spied no more precipitous steep
Than wheezy abbot may ride up at speed,
Maugre his asthma and his last night's supper.
  Ye 'll wade neck deep thro' pits of polar snow,
But take good heed the safe bravado 's made
When the crisp grass is frizzling in the dog-days!
  And burning sands of Africa uncheered
By freshet or green bush, unshod, unbonneted,
Ye 'll course them bravely, as ye wipe your lips
New steeped in mazer of cool Malvoisie!
But, as I know your court infirmity,
I will not tax you to the scale of promise,
But condescend to your weak faculty.
  (*Advancing to the garden wall and shooting her arrow slantingly across to the other side.*)
There, fetch me that without the warder's leave,
And claim the guerdon then.
  (GRAY *and* MAXWELL *look at each other and burst into laughter.*)
  Gray. No make-believe, though;
No formal mock court shadow of a kiss,
But a substantial yeomanly transaction
Authenticates by sound.

Max. Whose clear report—

Eliz. Shall set the echoes on Schiehallion longing,
Be not the fault thine own, Sir Trumpeter.

Gray. A tempting bribe, Maxwell! Wilt try for it?

Max. (*Looking at the moat, and shrugging his shoulders*)—
Nay faith, 'twas Luvale won the prize at leaping.

Eliz. I bar his trying tho'; ye were the braggarts.

Max. The moat—

Eliz. Fye! fye! 'tis nothing but a ditch.

Max. The ditch, then, is confounded broad. Its waters
Not very deep, 'tis true; but then, their bed--

Eliz. Is not a hard one. It will break no bones.
'Tis just the bed your sage Egyptian courtier,
In old King Pharaoh's time, Sir Crocodile,
For choice would sleep in and for luxury.—

Gray. A soft sweet hammock of succumbent mud.
But say 'twere possible to leap across,
Must we so back again?

Eliz. That's the condition—
There is no bargain else.

Gray. I' faith, for me, then,
Sir Cupid may go grope for his own arrow.
To leap down might be tried—but to leap back
Against this wall—I am no water-rat,
I am for being buried on dry land,
And liefer would have worms than eels to eat me.
Sound sleep, Sir Crocodile! and pleasant dreams:
Wear thy soft coverlid ungrudged for me!

(LUVALE *takes* GRAY *and* MAXWELL *aside, and whispers to them.*)

Max. Across the ditch!

Luvale. Even so. I witnessed it
Not half-an-hour ago, as chance I sat
In the close arbour there behind the juniper.

Gray. Who had the charge?

Luvale. Cahoun and Thomas Chambers.
And when the fellows carried them had gone,
They tried them on the ditch. They bridge it still.

Gray. Planks laid across the ditch—
What means it, know'st thou?

Luvale. I cannot tell. I guessed me some repairs
On the moat's dyke against to-morrow's sports.

Gray. Ho! ho! fair lady! then, look to thy lips!
Don't tell it her. (*Aloud*) Ho! Maxwell, for the arrow!
Now for eye-service; for lip-service next. [*Exeunt.*

Eliz. (*calling after them.*) When ye are chin-deep in that fat black gruel,
And have a modicum of your mud-bath,
Be sure you hollow lustily! For when
We hold you duly dubbed, we'll fish with boat-hooks,
And drag ye out, my gentle knights of Nile!
And now, my longing pair of cooing turtles,
Have I not done that cleverly to serve you?

Luvale. To serve us; how?

Eliz. Have I not purchased you,
That ye've been sighing for this livelong day—
A cosy *tête-à-tête?* There is no saying
But I myself one day may need the like,
And, therefore, have I done the good Samaritan.
Now, Cupid, give you grace to say your say,

Or sigh your sigh, or kiss your kiss at leisure—
Don't garble them for haste. 'Twill be good hour
Or e'er mine arrow-hunters will disturb you. (*Runs off.*)

Cath. Stay, stay, Elizabeth; dear cousin, pray thee—
Was ever such a mad-cap?

Luvale. Rather say,
More sober wisdom, more considerate love,
Mantled in mirth's undress—
There was a purpose in her playfulness:—
Your cousin's jest but hit my thought in sadness.
There 's something on thy mind. In this day's revels,
That were of all the gayest and the merriest,
I marked but two whose brow wore cloud on it—
The good Queen and thyself. There is some mystery
Is shared betwixt you both. If it be aught
Threatens the King, her Highness, or thyself,
I dare not boast, to prank my proffered service,
A statesman's schooling or experience;
Nor may I vaunt me of my soldier's sword,
'Tis girt too new for that; but if a heart
Will cheerly spend the life that 's lodged in it,
For each or all make me confessor meet
For so dear confidence, command and trust me.

Cath. Luvale! thou must to France.

Luvale. To France!

Cath. Nor tarry
For taking leave—the Queen will pardon it:
Depart this very night.

Luvale. Doth Catherine Douglas
Wish my departure, then?

Cath. The Queen—

Luvale. But thou—

But dost thou wish it too?

Cath. I have what cause

To wish 't, the Queen has, and a cause besides,

That she wots nothing of.

Luvale (*walking about, agitated, and speaking to himself.*)

They were the two

Alone, resolved me to remain in Scotland,

'Gainst weighty reasons said their nay to it—

And now the life-shoots of the heart I've struck

Fondly and far into my native earth,

They bid me rive them with a mortal wrench,

And thrust in foreign mould! (*To* CATHERINE DOUGLAS)

Sir Robert Stewart—

Is he not cause of this?

Cath. He is.

Luvale. I guessed so.

To please thy lover thou—

Cath. To please my lover!

Luvale. 'Tis known he loves thee. My Lord Athole's heir,—

The cousin of the king—his favourite—

Failing that child, his heir,—Beyond the sea

He drove me once before, thro' Athole, hunting me

As they would hunt a wolf. Methinks 'tis hard

To be thus bandied between France and Scotland,

Because I hap to have for enemy

One is too mighty to be checked by law,

And too ungenerous to be swayed by honour!
But that thy lips, the lips of Catherine Douglas,
Should be his messenger!—

Cath. Were Robert Stewart—"
What all the saints defend he e'er should be!—
Scotland's liege lord, and woo'd me for his queen,
I would not answer him in otherwise
Than I have done to-day.

Luvale. To-day!

Cath. When I
Refused to hear his suit, was pressed more closely,
More freely and more insolently bold
Than e'er he dared before, and angrily,
Answered I know not what,—his fury thundered
Into a storm of bedlam blasphemies,
Still makes my blood run cold! Amid the hurricane
Of frantic imprecations hurled at thee,
'Spattered with names of scorn, and against them,
The fated fools did foster thee, he dropped
Mysterious hints of black and fearful import,
Touching to-morrow, when the dainty mammet
Scorned him to-day, would be right fain to supplicate
To be the concubine of Robert Stewart—
Luvale, thou must to France.

Luvale. As for myself,
I stand his feud. But them did foster me,
Said he, the fated fools—

Cath. It was his phrase—

Luvale. There may be danger there. The king's too fearless.

His guards are billeted among the citizens
Too sparsely for the call of sudden need.
Who hath the watch to-night?

Cath. Hall and his brother.

Luvale. I think they 're honest, yet I would Dunbar
Had it, or I; I 'll go walk round the walls,
To see an all be sure, then speak Lord Angus,
My Lord of Orkney, and the king's most friends,
To pray his Grace—

Cath. Hush! hush! they 've found the arrow;
I must begone. Thou wilt not then to France?

Luvale. No, not a foot: not though Sir Charles of France
Did bribe me with his staff of Constable.
Thou 'st spoken that spell-fasts me here in Scotland,
Fixed as the strands that to her mountain's side
Tether her native oak; the king 's in danger,
And Catherine Douglas loves not Robert Stewart!

[*Exeunt severally.*

Scene Second.

THE SAME—THE CITY WALLS NEAR THE PRINCIPAL GATE.

(*Enter, in conversation,* SIR WALTER LUVALE *and* SIR JOHN HALL.)

Hall. Well, well, to humour thee; and I will charge
My brother, too, look warely to his watch.
But, sooth, to-night, I meant to join your revels,
And grudge me sorely to be balked, and all

For this new whimsy—for I guess it so—
Of our good English Queen. She cannot see
A knave on horseback sway his switch of hazel
But she imagines it a brandished dagger;
Or spy a shaggy herdsman from his hill,
Wrap in his rachan from the snell nor'-east,
But she transforms him into Robert Græme,
Fumbling his dudgeon in his mantle's fold;
Nor hear a bagpipe at a rustic wedding,
But straight she dreams of Highland hosts a-gathering,
Rebels, and risings, and conspiracies,—
And falls a-swooning for her dear lord's life!

Luvale. Was 't but her whimsy that conspiracy,
Drew the king off so suddenly from Roxburgh?

Hall (starting, and eyeing Luvale for a moment with a look of inquiry and suspicion, but seemingly reassured).

Some say it was, and some say it was not;
For me, I cannot tell. But for this night
Thou mayest go soundly sleep, Sir Chamberlain,
And vouch thy royal mistress, Sir John Hall
Will answer freely with his neck, to-morrow,
For every traitor, or one 's more a traitor
Than is himself, shall enter Perth to-night. [*Exit* LUVALE.
Needless bravado if our plot miscarry,
And safe if it succeeds! 'Tis well we 're ready
Ere the Queen's evil catch! I pray, Sir pointer,
Thou snuff thy rounds out ere the gloamin 's done;
For an thou scent our wild red Athole deer,
Are padding now upon the hoof from Methven,
Sir William Crichton, and Sir Robert Lauder,

And their fell hounds, the jailor and the hangman,
Will have fresh venison, I trow, to-morrow ! [*Exit.*

Scene Third.

SCENE CHANGES TO AN OPEN SPACE IN FRONT OF BLACK-FRIARS' MONASTERY.

(*Enter hastily* MORAG, *covered with dust, and exhausted as after a long journey.*)

Morag. Heigho ! heigho ! but I 'm before ye yet !
Ay, loon by loon I counted them, three hundred !
Like cats i' the grey, creeping to Methven wood,
By twos, and tens, and twenties !
To steal a bride ! fye, fye ! Black John o' Lude,
And Farquhar Cam—busk ye such foresters,
After such deer ! To hunt the girnel mouse,
Hound ye the mountain wolf ! Bravely I wot
The bride ye 're looking for. Your winsome marrow
Hath hair upon her chin, and for a curch
She wears a crown !
(*Looking up to the windows of the apartments, which are brilliantly lighted, and from which music is heard.*)
Torches and tapers ! piping and taboring,
Harping and minstrelling, in dead men's chambers !
(*Looking out.*)
Ho ! here 's a brother of their black covyne ;
This night-hawk harbours in the royal dove-cot.
Christopher Chambers ; ay, he served the Albanies

That day they chased me from their castle-gate,
And set their dogs at me, because I told them
How he, that hell-hound i' their banquet-hall,
Sat a chief guest, hoo! hoo! (*shuddering.*) Woe 's' me!
woe 's me!
It 's a black day for thee, Sir James of Scotland,
When Albany's doers keep thy castle's key!

(*Enter, with the key of the Monastery gate in his hand.* CHRISTOPHER CHAMBERS. *He advances slowly, with a sad and abstracted air, without observing* MORAG, *and pauses before entering.*)

C. Chambers. Hell hath me hand and foot! Thrice I attempted it,
To warn King James to-day. Some cursed chance
Did ever thrust between to baffle me!
Stewart, Cahoun, my brother, and the Halls,
Dog him, like hunters closing round their quarry,
Or keen-eyed eagles keep the stag in view,
Limps to his brake to dy!
For long ten years
Of his own chamber, fostered, friended, favoured,
Yet sworn to take his life! Some gracious angel
Shield him this second time! I, vowed his enemy,
Am won his friend; yea, from my heart's core love
The brave, kind master I am leagued to murder!

(MORAG, *who has overheard him, springs suddenly forward, and seizes his arm.*)

Morag. But thou 'lt not do 't. Thou wilt not murder him.

Chamb. (*starting, and drawing his sword.*)
Ha! eaves-droppers! pshaw, 'tis some crazy wretch.
She wots not what I mean. (*Proceeds toward the gate.*)
Morag. Thou 'lt let me in—
I am in haste to speak with him.
Chamb. With whom?
Morag. James Stewart, King of Scotland.
Chamb. What wouldst thou,
I pray thee, with James Stewart, King of Scotland?
Morag. I have a message for his private hearing—
There 's none may hinder me—'twere treason else,
There 's life in it or death.
Chamb. A likely messenger,
To post on life and death! I 'm of his chamber,
Wilt thou not trust it me?
Morag. Thou 'rt not his cousin?
Chamb. I am his cousin's friend.
Morag. Who was the king,
The selcouth women stopped upon that moor,
Near by the Moray's Firth?
Chamb. I think Macbeth.
Morag. Who slew his king and cousin?
Chamb. Ay, what then?
Morag. There 's bloody work toward—
Chamb. (*aside.*) There is indeed;—
But hast thou wot thereof? (*Aloud*) Robert of Athole
Is cousin to our king. Thou wouldst not say—
Morag. He came from England when I sent for him,
And hanged the hell-hounds all! Love-service for love-service!

Chamb. But who hath sent you with this message?

Morag. Houart.

Chamb. Houart, I pray thee, who is he?

Morag. A king.

Chamb. And of what kingdom?

Morag. Of the mere and mountain.

Three days and nights in the brown moors he fed me
But malt or meal; made me a bed of heather;
And when I felt footsore upon my journey,
He sent me his brave chariot, yon grey cloud—
Thou seest I am not tired!

Chamb. Alas! poor wanderer,
Thy looks belie thee, then.

(*Aside*) She is but mad,—
There was no meaning in her speech; but still
Her idle fancies seem to ever harp
Some danger to the King. The Queen is timorous,—
Might not this crazy wretch by indirection
Be made mine instrument, and so inoculate
The Queen with fears, that to forfend the false
They might prevent the true?

(*To* MORAG) Good woman! follow me.

[*Exeunt together into the Monastery.*

Scene Fourth.

INTERIOR OF THE MONASTERY.

(*The royal apartments. They are brilliantly lighted and crowded with courtiers. At one table the* QUEEN *is play-*

ing chess with the EARL OF ATHOLE; LORD ANGUS *and* SIR ROBERT STEWART *looking on. At another a party of courtiers engaged in the game of tables (or draughts). More in front the principal group is listening to a band of musicians, who, in a recess of the apartment (concealed from view) play some pieces of ancient Scottish music. This group includes the* KING, *the* EARL OF ORKNEY, SIR ANDREW GRAY, SIR HERBERT MAXWELL, SIR WALTER LUVALE, *with* ELIZABETH *and* CATHERINE DOUGLAS. *When the music has ceased,* ELIZABETH DOUGLAS *goes into the recess in which the musicians are stationed, but returns immediately.*)

Eliz. They cannot play that air I liked so well,
Your Grace invented last. But is it true
You heard it in a dream? Sleep hath, I know,
Its proper organ; 'tis an instrument
I've heard full oft fair ladies practise on;
But ne'er, I own, did relish much the music
The minstrels drew from it! But royal slumbers
Are lulled, 't would seem, to sweeter symphonies!

King. Makers and minstrels plead the privilege
Of dreaming in both kinds.

Eliz. How in both kinds?

King. Awake and sleeping. But your lord of dreams,
Whoe'er he be, hath no respect of persons:
For sooth to say my last night's dreams were not
Of sounds celestial, but infernal discords,
Of hissing serpents, crawling and cursed things,
Loathly and venomous! That horrid dream,
It makes me shudder still.

Eliz. What dreamt your Highness?

King. Methought the reptile, an enormous serpent,
Lashing my body in his clammy coils,
Sprang headlong with me to his noisome den,
Deep underneath the ground, a hideous hole,
Dark, dank, and fetid with Tartarean smells.—
Vainly I struggled in his strangling clasp,
His poisonous breath so palsied soul and sense,
I could not cry for help. At length his neck
Curving aloft in air, the monster snake
With a shrill hiss darted his forky fang
Full at my throat. I made a desperate bound,
And waking found me on my chamber's floor
In a cold dew, trembling from head to heel!

Max. Now, by St. Colm! is it not passing strange!
I am not given to dreams. My whole life long
I have not dreamt a score; yet last night I
Had a most frightful too.

Eliz. Then out with it!
In dreams, as in discourse, I love the merry;
But here 's a listener, my gentle cousin,
Affecteth the sublime, and most of all,
When it doth kinder with the horrible,—
Flies over steeples on a griffin's back,
Parleys o' nights with caterwauling ghosts
Under the gibbet tree; with rapier's point
Doth toothpick's office to the crocodile—
Dream me a dream so charming horrible,
And I will wager me thou didst—

Max. Did what?

Eliz. Didst eat last night a most superfluous supper,
And for confessor need'st the apothecary!

King. Is that the poetry of dreams? Now, Maxwell,
Thou 'st heard the cause, deliver the effect.

Max. Would my sage doctor of the cap and kirtle,
Thou hadst my supper and my dream with it
For sauce to aid digestion! Thus it was then:—
Methought we were again in Athole's forest
Hunting the mountain bull. Our sport was brave,
And we had slain, so seemed, a noble brute,
After a gallant chase, when as we crowded
Around the fallen beast, scanning with wonder
His bulk, his brawn, his beauty, o' the sudden,
He sprang bolt upright on his legs unhurt,
And laughing loud, 'Dost thou not know me, tyrant?
I am Sir Robert Græme!'—

Ork. (*Grasping* MAXWELL'S *arm, and pointing to the table at which the* QUEEN *is playing.*)
Fye! Art thou mad?
If thou must tell thy foolish dreams, speak lower.
(MAXWELL *is silent.*)

King. And what ensued? He smote me as sheer dead
Upon the instant, as thy listener there,
Sir Walter Luvale, did his prototype,
That day he saved my life. Was it not so?

Max. I think it was; but sooth I scarce can tell,
For with the fright I woke so suddenly—

King. Even as thy cook composed thy last night's supper,
So did thy fantasy thy last night's dream.
He dressed thee a new mess—a heavy one,

For so thy dream bewrays, of old materials
Minced and mixed up, suet and spice—
Eliz. What! Maxwell,
A haggis, as I live! Didst sup on haggis?
King. So did thy fancy out of old events
Compound the crude concoction of thy dream,
Of a false history making, so at least
Beldames will swear it thee, true prophecy.
Luvale. Yet dreams, my liege, albeit not prophecies,
Though but wild shuffles of our waking thoughts,
And windy shadows of our waking acts,
May warn at times of duty or of danger.
If Maxwell's dream persuades your Highness more
To guard your life against the traitor's dagger,
What lacks him of a prophet's fame or fee
A grateful nation shall o'erpay the patriot.
Orkney. Luvale speaks true, my liege.
King. Oh, ye have heard
The Rhymer's rede they troll about our streets,
Betides this year a king is slain in Scotland.
Luvale. Such prophecies do oft fulfil themselves—
They light a purpose in a madman's brain;—
They lend a courage to a villain's arm:—
Till a blind guess doth quicken to a cause,
And turns a random rede to history.
King. Who in our last week's revels was 't we chose,
And crowned for king of love?
Eliz. Sir Walter Luvale.
King. Sir King of Love! then 'ware that prophecy.
There are two kings in Scotland, thou and I,

Look to thy life and warily, for wete thee
I mean to do to mine—

Luvale. Grant Heaven it be so;
And to that end I pray for a beginning,
They who are trusted with your Grace's safety
Be lodged together within call of need,
And not dispersed among the citizens.

King. We 'll talk of that to-morrow. The meanwhile
Here is a new romaunt is sent to me,
Writ by Sir Hew of Eglinton, who sings
As bravely as he fights. But we 'll disturb
These gamesters else,—so pray ye come within
And I will read it you—

(*Tumult heard in outer court, and loud voices as quarrelling.*)

But Stratoun, ho!

(*Enter* STRATOUN.)

What sudden hubbub 's here?

Stratoun. 'Tis that wild woman
Did stop your Highness on the pier at Leith.

King. There 's none molesteth her?

Strat. I found her struggling
With Thomas Chambers and Cahoun, demanding
To see your Grace upon a thing of haste
Had life or death in it. She would not tell it me.

King. Bid her disclose it to my chamberlain.

Strat. I named him too; but then her fury foamed
Into a storm of madness, and she showered on him
Curses and evil names, and spake of things
So black and damnable, it made my flesh
Grue, and doth make it still, to think of them.

King. Some crazy crotchet that infects her brain,—
I 'll speak with her to-morrow—tell her so,
And charge Cahoun and Chambers use her gently.
[*Exit* STRATOUN.

(*The* KING *and those with him retire out of view, into the recess or side-room that had been occupied by the musicians.* SIR ROBERT STEWART, *who has been anxiously listening to the conversation between the* KING *and* STRATOUN, *quits the apartment hurriedly, as soon as the* KING *and his party have disappeared.*)

Scene Fifth.

FRONT OF THE BLACKFRIARS' MONASTERY, AS IN SCENE THIRD.

(*The gate of the outer court opens.* CAHOUN *and* THOMAS CHAMBERS *are forcing out* MORAG, *who resists, although feebly, as one exhausted with fatigue.* STRATOUN *follows them.*)

Strat. I pray thee now, he 'll speak with thee to-morrow :
(*Offering some silver.*)
Here 's will provide thee bit and bield till then.
Morag. Away ! it 's hush-money ! it 's arles for treason !
There 's blood on it ; ye are his murderers.
Chamb. (*shaking her roughly*)—
Thou foul-mouthed hag ! an thou not hold thy peace,
We 'll tight thy thrapple with St. Johnstoun's tippet.
Strat. Nay, use her gently, 'tis the King's command.
[*Exit* STRATOUN.

Morag. To-morrow thou wilt speak with me, James Stewart.

Where shalt thou be to-morrow—where shall Morag?

(*Enter from the Monastery* SIR ROBERT STEWART.)

Stewart. Off with the devil's dam! To the ditch with her.

Fling her head foremost in to sink or swim,

'Twill show an she be witch.

Morag (*after looking steadily for some time at* STEWART *and as to herself*)—

The bride he beds with,

I wot is growing in the Torwood yet,

And he 's a gruesome carl will buckle them—

But not a friar o' them, black or grey,

Can tie a faster knot. 'T will be brave bridal,

And thousands to look on.

Stewart. Whose ban or bridal,

Thou devil's druerie! art muttering now?

Morag. There will be spurring ere the broose be won,

And staucherin steeds; and by they clear the ford—

Stewart. What then?

Morag (*pausing and looking expressively at* STEWART)—

No Athole-Stewart shall be Athole's lord.

Stewart. Hell-hag, thou ly'st! There shall be lords of Athole

Of Stewart's name, and kings of Scotland too,

When thou art carrion, meat for curs and crows.

Morag. The worst is last! Ay, ay—Of Athole's blood

No Stewart ever shall be Scotland's king.

Stewart (*lifting his sword to strike her*)—

Ha! sing'st thou, hell-bird?

Cahoun. Nay, my Lord, beseech thee,
The wretch is dying. Keep thy steel unbloodied—
Remember that 's to do.

Stewart. They 're breaking up—
The lords will pass this way—this ominous magpie
She will keep chattering still. Away with her,
And fling her carcase in some ditch or dunghill,
Where she may rave or rot.

(*Exeunt* CAHOUN *and* CHAMBERS, *forcing* MORAG *off the stage.*)

Now skaith for scorn
Bonny Kate Douglas and my cousin king!
Call to the rescue an it boots ye now
Your Jack o' the moors, your many-fingered minion,
Your knight o' the mushroom armed with oracles,
And rhymes, and redes, and lying trumpery.
I 'll meet him at that ford of Acheron,
Where'er it be, and try conclusions there,
Shall prove if Erceldoune or Robert Stewart
Be soothest seer: For thus I prophesy,
Despite the drivel of this dying witch,
That Stewarts shall be lords of Athole still,
And Athole's blood shall be the kings of Scotland. [*Exit.*

Scene Sixth.

A NARROW STREET, OR WYND, IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE MONASTERY—MORAG IS DISCOVERED ON THE GROUND DYING.

(*Enter hastily from the farther end of the street, as advancing towards the Monastery*, SIR WALTER LUVALE.)

Luvale. The watch deserted! Neither to be found
Hall nor his brother! There is worse, I fear,
Than mystery in 't. (*Observing* MORAG.)
Whom have we here? a woman!
Some dying wretch.
Morag (*speaking to herself*)—
To-morrow, O to-morrow!
That black and bloody morrow! James of Scotland,
Did I not redd thee an thou crossed that ferry
Back on the live thou never shouldst return?
But it 's true saying, weirded men are wilful!
Come late, come air, there 's no eschewing weird.
It will repent ye, Sirs, I trow, to-morrow,
Ye would not let me speak with him to-night.
Luvale. It is the woman asked so earnestly
To speak the King. Poor woman! thou art ill,
Cheerly I 'll bear thee to—
Morag. The King! My blessing,
The blessing of poor Morag be on thee
For that kind word! But oh, fast, fast, beseech thee
Faster than malkin ever fled from hound—

Faster that ouzle ever fled from hawk—
Or we shall be too late. For oh, I 'm weary,
And dizzy, dizzy—and they 're yonder, yonder—

Luvale. Who 's yonder ?

Morag. Robert Græme.

Luvale. Nay, my good woman,
Thy wits are wavering now—

Morag. Wae's me ! wae's me !
I doubt they waver whiles, and gar me trow
Things that be not. Yet loon by loon I counted them.
Fast foot and heavy hand, a full three hundred
From Athole's braes, crouching like wild cats yonder
For the dead spring.

Luvale. But where ?

Morag. Among the bushes
Ayont the garden's ditch.

Luvale. They cannot pass :
The moat is broad and deep.

Morag. There 's planks on it—

Luvale. Ha ! that is guessed like truth ! I marvelled me
These planks were laid. Who comes ! What, ho Dunbar !

(*Enter* SIR DAVID DUNBAR.)

I 'm glad thou 'rt come. I fear there 's treason doing.

Dunbar. Upon King Houart's affidavit, is 't not ?
Vouched by his envoy, Lady Wisdom, there ?
Thou know'st her, man, dost not ? 'T is poor mad Morag,
The spaewife of Lochaber.

Luvale. Wood, or wise,
She 's told me that so lends suspicion circumstance,
It makes the worst surmise the likeliest.

There 's not a soldier upon watch to-night
On all our city's round.

Dunbar. Where's Sir John Hall?

Luvale. I cannot find him, nor his brother neither—
I doubt me Græme 's within the walls in hiding,
And Hall conjunct with him. Come, rouse we haste
The nearest citizens. Poor wretch! (*to* MORAG) I 'll send
Anon shall care for thee. [*Exeunt* LUVALE *and* DUNBAR.

Morag (*sola*). Love-service for love-service!
That 's Morag's wage. But oh! I 'm weary, weary!
I wish I were on Inverlochy braes,
In my own glen among the broom and brackens;—
The corrie's burn would croon me to my rest,
And they would lay me down beside her, under
That bonny rowan-tree! And we would sleep
Soundly, my sister! soundly. I'm right fain—
It 's weary world when there is nought to do—
And Morag would have nought to do to-morrow,
But to the hills and weep! (*Listening anxiously.*)
Hist! hist! not yet—
It 's Morag must go first.

(*A light like the blaze of torches flashes suddenly, and* MORAG *by a desperate effort starts upon her feet, exclaiming*)—
O help! help! help!
Thy weird is come on thee; wake James of Scotland.
O villains! villains!
(*Attempts to run out, but falls and expires, exclaiming*)—
Treason! treason! treason!

Scene Seventh.

THE ROYAL BED-CHAMBER—THE QUEEN WITH CATHERINE AND ELIZABETH DOUGLAS STANDING BEFORE THE FIRE-PLACE, AS LISTENING ANXIOUSLY.

(*Enter to them the* KING *in his night-gown and slippers.*)

King. Did ye too hear that noise? I think my knaves
Be in their cups, and fallen to fisticuffs—
Cath. No, no; to me it sounds the hurried tramp
Of men have harness on. (*A blaze of light.*) Kind Heaven!
what 's that?
Queen. Oh! 't is Sir Robert Græme.
King. I doubt this time
Thou hast guessed true. He takes me unprepared—
(*Looking about for something to defend himself with.*)
I 've not of steel might pare an apple's rind –
Here 's for a time— (*Attempts to fasten the chamber-door.*)
Good heavens! it will not turn.
The lock is damaged. Ha! the bolt removed—
Then there is treason in 't!

(*A loud shriek is now suddenly heard from the farther extremity of the long corridor or passage, leading to the banqueting hall, and* STRATOUN *retreating towards the* KING'S *chamber is heard calling Treason! treason! his voice becoming, by degrees, fainter and fainter, till at length it ceases*

altogether, and a sound is heard as of something falling heavily against the outside of the bed-chamber door, which the KING *still keeps shut.*

Queen. Oh! hark, my Lord,
'T is Walter Stratoun's voice.

King. My faithful page!
Oh! had I but wherewith to 'venge thee on them,
And sell my life, as should the King of Scotland!
But to be cooped and slaughtered in a shambles!

Cath. (*placing her shoulder against the door, and pointing to the window*)—
There, there, my Lord! We 're not the bird is wanted—
And I have found a bolt will keep this staple.
(*Thrusting her arm into it by way of bar.*)

Eliz. What, Catherine, art thou mad?

Cath. It fits it, cousin—
Go thou and help the King.

King (*after attempting for some time, in vain, to loosen the stancheons from the window*)—
They 've newly batted them—
There's not a bar will yield. Ha! (*Looking at the floor.*) underneath
There is a vault. It has, I think, an opening
Into the outer court. Had I but tool—
And (*Snatching the massive tongs from the fireplace*)
—Here 's may serve a need.

(*With a desperate effort he succeeds in forcing a plank from the floor, making an aperture large enough to admit his person. The conspirators assail the door of the bed-chamber with violence.*)

Eliz. Haste, haste, my Lord!

(*The* KING *leaps down into the vault. The plank is replaced, and some rushes thrown over it by* ELIZABETH DOUGLAS. *The conspirators now enter the apartment led by* SIR ROBERT GRÆME, CATHERINE DOUGLAS, *with her arm broken, being dashed against the floor, on which she lies in a swoon. The* QUEEN *stands stupefied with terror in the middle of the apartment, and* ELIZABETH DOUGLAS *places herself on the plank by which the* KING *had made his escape.*

Gr. (*on entering*)—
Albany! Albany! now thou bloody tyrant!
Not here! the bird is flown!

Chamb. Oh, do not fear it;
His cage is barred too well; and there 's not cranny,
Closet, or cupboard in this monkery
Where cat might creep, or rat take sanctuary,
But I do know them all. Here 's the brood-hen,
I 'll first make sure of her. (*Offering to kill the* QUEEN.)

P. Gr. (*arresting his arm*)—
Shame on thee, Chambers!
A woman, fie!

Gr. Mind not the wolf-dog's litter,
First find the wolf himself.

[*Exeunt the conspirators.*

———

Scene Eighth.

A CORRIDOR, THE BODY OF STRATOUN LYING NEAR THE ENTRANCE TO THE ROYAL BED-CHAMBER.

(*A noise is heard as of persons rummaging the chambers in all directions in search of the* KING. *After some time the voice of* THOMAS CHAMBERS *is heard behind the scenes as from the royal bed-chamber, exclaiming*)—

Chamb. Ho, Sirs! What ho! the bonny bride is found
That we have come and carolled for all night;—
There, Sir John Hall! Look down! Now, by my faith,
Thou 'st leaped it bravely! and thy brother too,—
Ye 'll have the handsel hug!

(*Violent struggling heard in the vault.*
The fell fiend worry him!
He hath them down! I' faith, Sir Robert Græme,
Thou 'rt come in time—I think he 's strangling them.

Scene Ninth.

THE ROYAL CHAMBER, AS IN SCENE SEVENTH.

(*The plank has been removed, and* CHAMBERS, CAHOUN, *and other conspirators are seen surrounding the aperture, holding torches so as to throw their light into the vault. Violent struggling heard below.*).

Gr. (*in the vault*)—
Confessor, didst thou say? Thou shalt have none

But this good sword. And mercy! begg'st thou mercy?
Like mercy have thou as thou shewedst on them,—
On Lennox, Albany, and Robert Græme.

(*Stabs the* KING *repeatedly, then comes hastily forward to the mouth of the vault.*)

Fie! help me out this hole; it stifles me.
Hall! sheathe thy knife. I cannot finish it—
This is mere butchery.

Cahoun. But thou must finish it—

T. Chamb. It must be done.

Gr. Must—fellows! must—
Come, then, and do 't yourselves.

Cahoun. Till it be done
Ye come not up alive. We 're all dead men,
An he be not.

T. Chamb. Ye pledged your knightly oath
To my Lord Athole and Sir Robert Stewart.

(*Noise as of a struggle in the vault, followed by a deep groan, and the sound as of a body falling.*)

Gr. Well, well, that darg is done. Put up thy dagger.
And now, ye ravening and remorseless dogs,
Have ye had blood enough? Help out this shambles!

(*The murderers are assisted out of the vault. They are besmeared with blood; and all, especially the two* HALLS, *bear the marks of a desperate struggle. Loud shouts are now heard from without, and enter hurriedly* PATRICK GRÆME.)

P. Gr. Away, away! the citizens are roused,
And arming hastily, come swarming on,
With Luvale and Dunbar.

Sir J. Hall. Dunbar and Luvale!
Then, by my faith, no May-game will it prove.
These are no swaggerers from their night's carouse,
To ringlead a street-brawl. Where is Earl Walter,
And Robert Stewart?

P. Gr. At their horses' speed,
Off to the North.

Sir J. Hall. Then to the North let us off after them,
While ports are free and darkness has our secret—
Else will they smoke us here like bees in byke,
Or knock o' th' pate like bullocks in our pound.
How says Sir Robert Græme?

(*To* Græme, *who stands abstractedly gazing down into the vault.*)

But ha! what ails thee?
In tantrum or in trance? What lookest thou on?
See'st thou a vision there?

Gr. (*as speaking to himself.*) Since Robert Bruce
We've not had such a king. Hadst thou but harness on,
All three we had not done't.

Sir J. Hall. What, then? Because
The man was stout, must these same three who slew him,
By thrice three hundred tarry to be butchered?
Our backers both have fled.

Gr. Our backers backed us
But with a huxter's heart. Their bauble's down—
Let them do play for't an they like, say I,
And all the saints to speed! But fight or flee,
Sit they on dais, or swing they from a tether,

Recketh not Robert Græme. The game he played for
Is past the spoiling. He hath slain the slayer—
To deadly reckoning he has brought his debtor—
He has revenge, and he is satisfied.

P. Gr. Away! away! They 're thundering at the gate;
I hear the war-shout of Dunbar and Luvale—
To the Garden Port! else shall we all to-morrow,
Wag on the Inch for earrings to the gallows.

[*Exeunt hastily the conspirators.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

Scene First.

ATHOLE—A NARROW ANGLE OR POINT OF LAND AT THE JUNCTION OF THE RIVERS TUMMEL AND GARRY—ON ALL SIDES ARE DEEP WOODS, RISING IN AMPHITHEATRE, AND TERMINATING EITHER IN LOFTY PEAKS OR IN A BOLD RANGE OF NAKED ROCKS.

(*Enter* SIR ROBERT STEWART *and* THOMAS CHAMBERS.)

Stewart. The doe turned lioness! It is a miracle
Thou tell'st me of. This timorous English woman
Started and swooned, chanced but a leaf to drop
Or twitter on a tree, grown o' the sudden
So fell an Amazon!

Chamb. As she inherited
Her husband's spirit with her husband's saddle,
She hunts his slayers to the death, and with
A spirit royal and resolved as his
When he pursued the slayers of his brother.

Stewart. We should have flung our banner on the breeze,
As Græme advised—proclaimed their deed as ours—
A thing to glory at—rallied around us
The friends of Albany, Stratherne, and Lennox—
And all were malcontent—recited boldly

The reasons ruled us in his taking off,
And stood upon our rights. Throve we or no,
That had been dared like men! But thus like vermin,
Hunted from hedge to hole! I 'll tell thee what—
There 's roomy bounds enough i' the Athole woods
To play at hide-and-seek. But I 'm resolved
To skulk no longer like a fox in furze,
But face my foes in day. And come the worst,
'Tis better dying in the bannered field
With harness on my back, like one has under it
The blood of Robert Bruce, than swing for show
To a vile crowd at Edinboro' cross,
Or have mine head hewed off with rusty hatchet
On Stirling's Castle knowe. There is thy warrant—
(*Giving his ring.*)
Summon all followers of our house to meet me
At Fascal-point on pain of death to-morrow,
Before the sun has set.

Chamb. Though their main chase
Follow Lord Orkney and Sir Herbert Maxwell
To the wilds of Mar, after Sir Robert Græme,
I have not heard them name Luvale or Gray
Among his hunters. Luvale is native here,
No hole to hide in but he knows through Athole,
Better than thou or I. And then to stir
The devil in him, there is that oracle
Thou wottest of. Here is a ford, and scant
A bow-shot off, Tummel and Garry meet—
So till to-morrow keep thee close in cover,
He may be prowling near.

Stewart. Would Heaven he were!
And stood before me now! For there be things
This spot remembers me. That hazel copse
Fringes a fairy semicircular nook,
Fast by the Tummel's fall, where the coy shriek
Of maiden squeamishness might pass unheard
Amid the shoutings of the cataract—
It hath a history. His buxom foster-sister,
My rare love-spoil, 'twas there he rescued her
Perforce from me, disarmed, dishonoured me,
Flung my snapped sword into the gulf, and bade me
Bless the kind luck endowed my ruffian's veins
With Bruce's blood, else had he flung myself.
In these woods, too—the day be cursed!—it was
The chance befel raised him, this peasant slave,
To be the minion of a court, to beard me,
And do me deadlier wrong. He robbed me, Chambers,
Robbed me of her, for whom I had refused
The daughter of a king! Oh! were he here,
With all his pedlar's pack of prophecies
For whetstone to his sword—
And all his fingers and his fords to boot—

Chamb. (*starting and looking round, then hastily drawing his sword*)—

Be 't Heaven responds thy wish, or hell, look there!

(*Enter suddenly from the Wood* Sir Walter Luvale *and* Sir Andrew Gray.)

Stewart. Ha! like the devil invents thee oracles,
Comest thou at naming of?

Luvale. Robert of Athole,
Yield thee my prisoner!
Stewart. Thy prisoner!
And who, I pray thee, noble Knight of air!
Commends me to thy worshipful jailorship?
Luvale. God's law and man's, for that thou hast done treason.
Stewart. Against Sir Walter Luvale of that Ilk,
And the dame Catherine Douglas, his fair lady,
Who lacks an arm as he exceeds a finger—
It makes the tally even.
Luvale. Thou heartless villain!
Makest thou thy scoff at that, wert thou not fiend
Had made thee worship her? Traitor and coward!
That slender arm, so brittle and so brave,
Performed the service had beseemed thine office
And manhood to have done. She was before
A woman, noble and young and beautiful,
A king might love: now she is more—a martyr,
An angel saint for men to supplicate,
To speed their suit to heaven!
Stewart. And so, Sir Bachelor,
O' th' Spartan order of the furnished finger,
The gentle filcher craft, to speed thy suit with her,
Thy one armed saint, this angel lacks a pinion,
Thou 'dst drag me to her feet thy prisoner,
To show how deftly her six-fingered knight,
The devil hath clawed to do the catchpole's office.
Thou many-fingered slave! lift thou but one of them
Against thy lawful king—

Gray. Ah, well-a-day!
And is our royal grandsire then deceased,
Walter the First, of famous memory?
His reign methinks was brief.

Stewart. Arede ye fellows,
Ye deal not now with threescore years and ten,
As my Lord Angus did, or fools have faith
In freits and oracles, and man-grown monsters,
And fields and fords, where roads or rivers meet

Lurale. In freits and oracles! Needed an oracle
Teach me to thread these woods, or find me ford
Where roads or rivers meet, thou wert that oracle:—
For, like a beast of prey, here hast thou hunted me
In deadly chase, till through the bounds of Athole
Was not a savage haunt, a cleft, or hole,
Where wounded thing might bleed or burrow in,
River to ford or swim, ravine or precipice
That might avail me on the pinch of need,
But like the hounded fox I knew them all
And this because I rescued from thy lust
A shrieking mountain maid. And when a king,
A generous king, my simple act of duty
Repaid at royal over-rate, the life
Thou dared'st not strike at openly, thou didst
With scorn essay, and stinging mockeries,
To make it burthen me. And, crowning all,
Thy loving kinsman, and thy gracious King,
Pampered thy life-long with his benefits,
Chose thee his chamberlain, his chief familiar,
His son-in-law, hadst thou but will'd it so,—

When, like a pick-lock thief, him—thou he had trusted so,
The keeper of his bower,—in bower unarmed,
Betrayedst to crouching cowards, struck at him
As dunghill curs worry a chained lion,
That thou mightst steal his crown,—talk'st thou to me
Of weirds, and fords, and bedlam oracles,
And count of fingers over complement,
The hazy hatchings of distemperature,
As if they needed me to find, or found
To drag thee to thy doom!

Gray. (*to* CHAMBERS.) And thou, good rascal,
Companion of the same right hangable order!
I pray thee let thy tool have holiday
Till these have played their play—or by the rood!
Thy womb shall scabbard this. Some ancient scores
They have to settle that concern not us.
And now, Luvale! now—
I will not balk thee of thine heart's desire—
I will not cumber thee with needless help;—
The prayer I've heard thee pray an hundred times,
Behold it granted! on the firm sward of Athole
Thou hast him foot to foot. So man with man
Your battle's wager, wage ye to the outrance,
And Heaven uphold the right! This cur, I'll muzzle him.

(LUVALE *and* STEWART *fight. After a desperate combat,* STEWART *falls to the ground wounded, his sword struck out of his hand.*)

Stewart. (*to* LUVALE). Take my life, fellow! for I scorn to hold it
On fee from such as thou.

Luvale. Thou art my prisoner;
But for thy life I may not take me it—
That is a sacrifice. It needs an altar—
The judge for priest, for it is due thy country.

Stewart. Yet tremble, traitors! our avenger lives,
Græme is at large.

Gray. Then, an he be at large,
It must be dangling over Stirling bridge:
For, thanks to Duncanson[1] and John Gorm Stewart[2]
Took them in Mar, father and son are prisoners
To my Lord Orkney and Sir Herbert Maxwell,
As fast as thou to us.

Stewart. Can the devil prophesy
Falsehood, yet fate! mocking alike with contraries,
The scoffer scorned him, and the dotard trusts—
Belief and unbelief? So much for oracles,
Show truth by halves only to bait damnation—
So sports the sophist fiend with all who serve him!

Gray. Nay, there thou wrong'st thy friend. He spake true oracles—
Thou didst his work, but wouldst not take his warning—
Bolting the boon, and boggling the condition.
For that like wayward and forbidden child,
Thou wouldst be trespassing where rivers meet,
And tempting fords, where men grown monsters haunt.
Hence comes thy weird. For 'Cross thou but this ford,
No Athole-Stewart shall be Athole's lord.'

---

[1] Robert Reoch Duncanson of Strowan.
[2] John Gorm Stewart of Garth.

'Tis well, our Rubicon 's not drowning deep—
To give thy devil his due, he riddled honestly.
(*Blows his bugle. Enter a party of armed men.*)
Hand-gyve and horse, for the Queen's prisoners!
Then, ho! for Holyrood.
[*Exeunt* STEWART *and* CHAMBERS *guarded.*

Scene Second.

EDINBURGH CASTLE—THE COUNCIL HALL.

(*The Chancellor,* SIR WILLIAM CRICHTON, *seated at the council-table, surrounded by the* EARLS OF DOUGLAS, ANGUS, ORKNEY, SIR ALEXANDER LIVINGSTON, SIR GILBERT HAY, SIR WALTER OGILVY, *and other Lords of the Council. At the bar, as prisoners, the* EARL OF ATHOLE, SIR ROBERT GRÆME, SIR JOHN HALL, PATRICK GRÆME, THOMAS HALL, THOMAS CHAMBERS, *and* CAHOUN. *In the background, a dense crowd of spectators. A clerk at the table has just finished reading a paper.*)

Athole. A crown of iron!—on these hoary locks!
To murder mockery!
Crichton. 'T was thine ambition
To dying wear a crown—the hope that hearted thee
To truck with oracles, and damned deeds,
Connive to damned ends. 'T will teach the lookers on
How keeps the devil troth with them that trust him.
Thy doom must needs confess 't, Sir Robert Græme,

It is a terrible. But monster crimes
Bring monstrous reckoning, treason and tragedied
With a foul murder.

Gr. I confess to neither;
There was no treason, nor no murder in 't.
He was no king of mine. I did disown him
By letters openly, as ye wot all,
Sealed with my seal of arms, defying him
To slay me or be slain. As he did me,
So did I outlaw him. He hunted me—
I waylaid him. 'T was life for life between us,
And he began the fray. I have but slain
God's creature was mine enemy, as he
Would have slain me. Had he been winner, tell me,
Time-serving tools to this kin-slaying tyrant,
Would ye have righted me, taken his life
In quits for taking mine, or doomed the tortures
Against the laws of Scotland and of nature
Ye have decreed on me? My flesh may falter,
And pain may trap my tongue to blasphemy;
But I appeal the Judge will judge us all,
It was my frenzy not myself blasphemed,
And ye compelled the sin.

For you, vile many (*To the crowd of spectators*)
Have hooted Robert Græme, and hunted him
As ye would hound was mad, and who will troop
To look upon his dying, and will count
Each start or shriek as the hot iron hisses,
Or the fell pincer fangs some nicer part,

Gazing upon his agony as ye
Would on a show shuts up a holiday—
The day will come when barefoot to his tomb
Ye 'll flock for pilgrimage—do penance there,
And pray for his soul's rest. And when they speak
O' winter nights around the ingle's blaze,
Of Scotland's worthies, of the brave Macduff,
Slew that usurper king at Dunsinane—
And William Wallace with his right arm red
With blood of Heselrig, and Robert Bruce
Smote the false Comyn at the altar's foot—
Then will they speak of Robert Græme, and match
His deed's renown with theirs—
A feller tyrant I have slain than they,
Had pity never upon sib or freme.
The deed is done. I have received my doom.
And were that deed to do, that doom foreknown,
I 'd do the deed again.

The two Halls. And so would we.

Athole. For me, while lives my grandson, Robert Stewart,
I will not falter in my faith, that Heaven
Foreseeth all things, and foreshoweth many,
As seen of late to strike the doubters dumb—
The half-accomplished will accomplish all.

(*Shouting heard outside. Enter an Officer.*)

Crich. What means that shout?

Officer. On the hill-tops to north
From the Weets of Baiglie on to Arthur's Seat,
Lights answer lights, a stream of beacons blazing,
Announces tidings.

Crich. Haste inform her Highness
That the last traitor 's ta'en, Sir Robert Stewart ;
It is the signal was agreed upon.
How fares thy faith, my Lord of Athole now ?

Athole. Oh, be they calendared the devil's priesthood
Invent these oracles—their dupes for dotards
Swallow for gospel what the fiend indites !
His truths come never in the trower's sense,
In nothing real, but the deed of sin
They damn the doer by.

Angus. Scotland's First James,
Her glory and her shame ! never had king
Kinsmen more treacherous, and never king
Had trustier, truer friends. We have avenged thee
With swords were consecrate in thy brave blood—
And now one terrible act of justice done,
Scotland, though sad, may raise her loyal shout,
God save our king, the Second James of Scotland !

APPENDIX TO 'JAMES THE FIRST OF SCOTLAND.'

In the First Edition of the Tragedy the following scene, which in the Play, as originally composed, stood as *Scene Fourth* of *Act Third*, was omitted, as from its length inconveniently retarding the progress of the action.

It is now subjoined in a detached form on the suggestion of a friend, it being, in his opinion, required in order to the clear understanding of certain other portions of the Play, and serving, at the same time, to bring more broadly out the Author's conception of some of the leading characters in his Drama.

PERTH—AN APARTMENT IN THE MONASTERY OF THE BLACK-FRIARS (OR DOMINICANS). THE QUEEN AND CATHERINE DOUGLAS AT DIFFERENT TABLES EMPLOYED IN ILLUMINATING TWO HANDSOME MANUSCRIPT VOLUMES. ELIZABETH DOUGLAS STANDING BY THE QUEEN'S CHAIR.

Queen. I will be judged now by thy cousin. This
Is not a palace but a monastery,

So mine 's the seemlier task. I beautify
This holy book records St. Baldred's virtues,
The friend of good King Aidan and St. Colm,
A fitting keepsake to bequeath the fathers
So kindly lodge us here; and for the which
They 'll in their orisons remember me—
Thou a vain lay of love—

Cath. Nay, not a vain,
'Tis of a victory, a royal one,
Over an enemy was worth the conquering,
A fair and noble queen.

Eliz. (*looking at the Queen's painting*)
Is that St. Baldred?

Queen. In sooth 'tis meant for him. Why dost thou laugh?

Eliz. Beshrew me but he looks own kittened brother
To grim old father Laurence of Lindores.

Queen. Ha! ha! I pray thee tell him so, he 'll count it
A most rare compliment.

Eliz. But doth your Grace now
Believe all 's written in that book you blazon?

Queen. Fye! fye! 'tis written by a holy friar.

Eliz. Then holy friars will write things do tax
A lay digestion hard.

Queen. As for example—

Eliz. That when three several parishes disputed
For the dead body of the saint to bury it,
And had their whittles out to fight for it,
Presto! appeared three bodies undistinguishable,
In form or feature, or habiliment,
All laid out fairly on three several biers,

Three Baldreds, none could tell which was the true one,—
So each bore off a Baldred for itself.
Now read me, hath each parish of the three
A whole or part, a Baldred or a bit?

Queen. Fye! now thou 'rt talking wild. I doubt some Lollard,
Some Taborite or Bohemian hath bit thee;
I must have Father Laurence of Lindores
Sent for to deal with thee.

Eliz. And how he 'll deal with me
It needs no witch to guess.

Queen. How 's that, I pray thee?

Eliz. Oh, as he dealt with Resby and Paul Craw,
He 'll reason with me first, and then he 'll roast me.

Queen. Is 't not the way to deal with heretics?

Eliz. With eggs your Grace would say. Out on such dealing!
I love fair play. Roast me, but spare me reasoning—
There is one way: or reason without roasting,
There is another; but to challenge me
T' a bout at reasoning, with a bonfire ready
To back your syllogism, is as a knight
Should in plate-armour fight a naked man.

Queen. Fye! how thy tongue runs riot! Fear'st thou not
The very rats i' the wainscot will report thee
To Father Laurence? Learn me now, I pray thee,
What task tongue-ties thy silent cousin there—
For this long hour I 've scarcely heard her voice.

Eliz. (*looking over* CATHERINE DOUGLAS'S *shoulder*)
'The King's Quair—Canto Third'—

Queen. Oh, where the poet
Tells of his voyage to the orb of love—
What, turns she there from poetry to picture?

Eliz. Hum! Something about Cupid, I suppose,
For here 's a boy stone blind, with bow and arrows,
And thatched with feathers from the halse to th' heel.

Queen. Oh, then I guess the place. Is't not this passage:—

'And by his mother in a chair of state,
With glossy wings all plumed, except his face,
With bow in hand, the blind boy Cupid sate,
The string was stretched as if to shoot apace,
Three arrows hung beside him in a case;
Their polished heads that glittered in the light
Were forged of divers metals, fair and bright,
And with the first, whose head is forged of *gold*,
Softly he smites—that wound hath easy cure!
The next of *silver*—that takes deeper hold,
And planteth wound is harder to endure.
The third of *steel*—its stroke is deadly sure!
His yellow hair flowed o'er his shoulders free,
With chaplet wove of green-wood leaferie!

Eliz. Beshrew your Highness for a memory!
But could you quote me for continuance
'*In a retreat*,' 'tis stanza twenty-third?

Queen. Ay, the whole Canto, and the other five.

Eliz. Prodigious!

Cath. And so couldst thou, Elizabeth,
Had they been writ on thee; a song so sweet
Made by a poet lover, and a King.

Eliz. 'Tis more, then, than I could my psalter-book :
And 't is not near so long. But ha ! ha ! ha !
(*Whispers to* CATHERINE, *who colours violently.*)
Cath. Nay, now Elizabeth, thou art malicious.
Eliz. I will be judged, then, by the Queen.
Cath. Now, cousin, do not—
I will be angry if thou do, indeed.
Queen. What's your dispute ?
Cath. Regard her not, your Highness,
She 's a malicious elf ; there is no truth in it.
Eliz. Beseech you to look here ; I said your Grace
Made a grim Baldred out of Father Laurence—
She's made a Cupid out of Walter Luvale !
Queen. Ha ! ha ! ha ! but that he lacks the wings,
And hath more eyes and fingers than the god,
She could not type from better—
Cath. Nay, your Grace,
It is a wicked and malicious—
Eliz. (*placing her hand on* CATHERINE'S *mouth*)
Truth.
The nose just trending on the Romanesque,
The brow, the cheek, the chin, the lips, and look !
It was just so he held his bow that day
He won the silver arrow at the butts
I' the weapon-shaw at Scone.
Queen. But tell me, pray thee,
How is the arrow headed ? If with *gold*,
Cupid prepares to shoot at Robert Stewart :
At Herbert Maxwell, if it be of *silver ;*
But, if of *steel*—

Cath. Nay, nay, beseech your Grace—
If this, her foolish jest, be told the King,
He and Sir Andrew Gray will never cease
Their rhymes and wicked wit. Look, the hair 's yellow—
Eliz. But that thou couldst not help: the poet fixed thee.
Cath. Besides, the eyes—
Eliz. Oh, Cupid has no eyes.
But if he had, thou wouldst have painted them
Of the true faith.
Cath. Thou 'lt force me, with thy fooling,
To fling it in the fire.
Eliz. That would be treason
Peppered with perjury. Thou 'st promised it
The King his New-year's gift.
Cath. Then I will mar it,
And give a beard to Cupid.
Eliz. The very thing!
It lacks but that to make the likeness perfect.
Nay, do not ruffle so, my Bantam cousin!
Sure there 's no harm in keeping of thy vow.
Cath. What vow?
Eliz. That should there be stuff found in him
Whereout the King could manufacture knight,
Thou 'dst marry him.
Cath. I said it but in jest.
Eliz. I promise thee 'twill be no jest for him
When Stewart comes to Court.
Cath. Which will not be
Until thy wit is cold.

Queen (*sighing, rises from her chair,* CATHERINE *and* ELIZABETH *stand on each hand of her*).

I fear it shall, Catherine,
He hath a magnet here.

Cath. Pride and ambition,—
These are his magnets.

Queen. Add revenge and love.
He loves thee. Nay, no protestations, girl—
I know thou lovest not him—I would another
Were of thy mind. But he 'll forgive him ; for
He sees but David Stewart in his son,
Who sees in him his balker of a throne.

Eliz. 'T is strange the hate he has to Walter Luvale
Shown from the moment that he looked on him.
There 's hate, 't would seem, at first sight as there 's love,
And Cupid is not Cupid to all eyes !

Queen. Some mystery 's in 't, I fear, and danger too.
It now repenteth me we stayed him here
Against his purpose to return to France,
So obstinately held we marvelled at it.
It cost long courtship to the King and me
To move him from 't. And I do think, fair Catherine,
We owe the change to thee.

(CATHERINE DOUGLAS *looks embarrassed and distressed.*)

Nay, nay, dear girl !
We 've been too hard on thee. I pray thee pardon me—
I would not give thee pain.

Cath. (*throwing herself at the* QUEEN'S *feet, taking her hand and kissing it.*)

'Tis I need pardon

For all my waywardness and childish folly.
Oh, never, never hath your Grace shown aught
But love and kindness to your Catherine Douglas.

Queen (*raising and kissing her affectionately*).

Fye, girl! thou makest me weep; whereto sad thoughts
Make me too apt o' late. Græme is at large,
And many such besides. The reckless King
Fears not and fends not, though from Tweed to Tay
Treason and traitors dog him. Needs him more
The fence of trustworth friends. 'T was this appeal,
When vulgar lures that bribe ambition failed,
I made in secret to his loyal faith,
Determined Luvale to remain in Scotland.
Ye will not marvel that I dearly rate
Such generous, noble, self-denying service,
Whereof the King knows not;—for he but laughs
If I but whisper my forebodings to him;
And says my witch of Endor, Morag, frightens me
With hazy oracles conceived in caves,
And mists and mountains, catch their colour from
The scene and circumstants as lakes from clouds,
Dismal and dark with blood and tragedy!
But come her knowledge whence or how it may,
She 's ever warned me true. Would I could find her!

Eliz. But is she not moon-mad?

Queen. I think she is;
But joins thereto a quick and subtle spirit
To catch at circumstance and construe it—
Then wildly weaves, in her mis-sorted web,
Truth and delusion, facts and fantasies.

For prompt atonement done her by the King,
On wretches who had wronged her brutally,
She watches over him as if her life
Were heavenly mission to defend his safety.
In her quaint oracles she darkly riddled
Of things seemed random at the time and raving,
Which late events have clad with circumstance,
Giving them substance and significance :.
Would we were safely over Forth again !

(*Enter the* KING, *attended by* GRAY, MAXWELL, DUNBAR, *and* LUVALE.)

King. The Graces in a group ! How now ? Ye look
As ye had seen a ghost ! Or has old Morag
Been here to frighten you ? Nay, by my faith,
I think ye have been weeping !

Eliz. We 've been reading
That lamentable book. Plague on the poet !
The ink he wrote with was distilled from onions,
Or never could his rhymes have set our eyes
Upon the smarting so. They say our legate,
The Bishop of Urbino, will be Pope.
He 's a fast friend of mine—we flirt by the hour.—
I must forespeak his by-and-bye Holiness
To have that wicked book forbid all monasteries,
So be, at least, there chance to sojourn there
Ladies have tender eyes.

King. What book is it
Owns to this crying sin ? *Mad Roland*, may be ;
The Dolorous Knight, then ? (*Going to the table.*)

Humph! *The King's Quair.*

And pray, fair lady of the showery eye,
What doleful ditty there hath so unsluiced
Thy lachrymatory's lids?

(ELIZABETH *turns over the pages of the MS. and points to a passage near the end.*)

Oh, the Envoy!

The winding up—the winning post—the wedding—
That 's the sure onion to a fair maid's eye.

(*Going up to the* QUEEN, *he places his arm affectionately round her waist, repeating the following stanza*)—

'But why should I recount each circumstance
Prospered my voyage to this wishèd shore—
The pains, the prayers, the service, or the chance?
The tale were long, and so I pass it o'er.
My royal flower! and what can I say more?
So heartily thou to my weal attendest,
From death thy husband-lover thou defendest!'

Nay, nay, no clouds: I 'll spare thee what doth follow.
I 've news for thee,—that last line minds me on't,—
I 've got a new defender for my Troy—
A Hector to mine Helen, one shall mate
Thy terrible Achilles, Robert Græme.

Queen. And who 's this paragon of Troy?

King. Gow Crom!

He 's my sworn man. We have contracted us
A bond of 'spalen, duelling, and reskew'
'Gainst all and sundry our joint enemies!

Eliz. What, Harry Wynd! the kill-kerne cannibal,
Offered his body in that butcher fight

Betwixt Clanchattan and Clankay, and all
For a poor half-mark's wage?

Gray. And a whole pension, though,
If he escaped. There's virtue in a pension,
Your true specificum for man or woman!
It turns to Turkey-red your cowards' liver,
Manures the fallow of your blockhead's brain,
Maketh your dumb dog bark, your barker dumb,
Mendeth your wooer's leg—

Eliz. Then get thee pension,
For thou hast need of it. Beseech your Grace,
How did you woo old bandy-legs?

King. By beating him
At pitching of the bar. He swore who conquered him
Deserved to wear a crown. And then he quoited
His greasy bonnet at the clouds, and with
A voice seemed stolen from a carrion crow
Hoarse from an indigestion's cold, he led
The loyal shout—God save King James! and down
With Robert Græme and all his enemies!

Eliz. O brave old bandy-legs! delightful cannibal!
I owe thee kiss for that! Does your Grace think now,
Would he not bite me tho'?

King. I' faith, Elizabeth,
I would not warrant him, the cherry's tempting.—
But come, the weather woos us, and, fair ladies,
I have brave plans to show you—grots and groves
On the slope bank of Tay, and hanging gardens,
And airy terraces that shall eclipse me

Those goodly bowers, Joan ! where thou and I
Had our young wooing time.

(*Pointing from the window to the east, or left bank of the river.*)

Yon rock-browed steep
Swept round and mirrored by the moating Tay,
So mapped with beauty and with majesty,
Nature hath marked it for a king's own home !—
Is 't not a noble stream ?

Queen. Ay, were 't but safe
To wander by, as mine own native Thames.

King. Nay, dear Joanna, an' thou love me, pray thee
No more of that. Thou 'rt like the ghost-rid school-boy,
That if he chance to walk abroad i' the gloamin',
Fancies a bogle in each bracken bush.
Dunbar and Luvale, look to these fair maidens ;
For be they ta'en in charge of Gray or Maxwell,
'Twill need the constable to keep the peace. [*Exeunt.*

TRAGIC DRAMAS

FROM

MEDIÆVAL HISTORY.

THE BRITISH BROTHERS.

A Drama.

IN FIVE ACTS.

PREFACE.

The following Drama was suggested by an incident to be found in Geoffrey of Monmouth, and other writers on the early portion of British History.

King Morin (or Morindus) of the Molmutian dynasty—that which followed on the extinction of the supposed race of Brutus—had five sons. The eldest, Gorbonian, succeeded him. On his death he was followed by the second brother Archigal (or Artegal), who, for his exactions and tyrannical government, was, some years after, dethroned by his subjects.—'Five years' (as the author of *Albion's England* sings, Book III. c. 16)

> 'Five years had Archigallo reigned,
> When hated, doing wrong,
> He was deprivèd of his realm,
> And livèd vagrant long,
> And fearing all, that friended none,
> Kept close the woods among.'

To him succeeded his next brother Elidure, surnamed '*The Pious*,' 'a mind,' says the historian, 'so noble, and so moderate, as almost is incredible to be found. For having held the sceptre five years, hunting one day in the forest of Callater, he chanced to meet his deposed brother wandering

in mean condition, who had been long in vain beyond the seas importuning foreign aids to his restorement, and was now in a poor habit, with only ten followers, privately returned to find subsistence among his secret friends. At the unexpected sight of him, Elidure, himself also then but thinly accompanied, runs to him with open arms, and after many dear and sincere welcomings, conveys him to the city Alcluyd; there hides him in his own chamber: afterwards feigning to be sick, summons all his peers as about greatest affairs—when admitting them, one by one, as if his weakness endured not the disturbance of more at once, causes them, willing or unwilling, once more to swear allegiance to Archigallo, whom, after reconciliation made on all sides, he leads to York, and from his own head places the crown on the head of his brother, who thenceforth, vice itself dissolving in him, and forgetting her firmest hold, with the admiration of a deed so heroic, became a true converted man, ruled worthily ten years, died, and was buried in Caer-leir.'—MILTON, *Hist. of England*, Book I.

After the death of Artegal, Elidure reascends the throne. But his younger brothers Vigen (or Viden) and Peredure, conspiring against him, he is by them defeated in battle, taken prisoner, and confined in the Tower of London (Troynovant)—where, during the lifetime of his brothers, who divided the kingdom equally between them, he remains in durance.

Surviving them both, however, Elidure for the third time ascends the British throne, 'which at last he enjoyed long in peace, finishing the interrupted course of his mild and just reign as full of virtuous deeds as days to the end.'

From this sketch it will be seen that the Drama is but very slightly indebted to the history. It has merely retained the two contrasted facts, the romantic instance of fraternal love exhibited by Elidure towards his elder brother, and, what stands in so remarkable antithesis to this act of self-denial and heroic virtue, the dethronement of himself by his younger brothers. And even these facts it has retained only in their barest generality, it having for dramatic purposes been found expedient to alter materially the antecedent and attendant circumstances, as they are related in history.

For all besides, for the general fable, the subordinate incidents, characters, change of locality, etc., the author is wholly responsible.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

ELIDURE,	*The reigning British King.*
MODRED,	*His dethroned elder brother turned Druid.*
VIDEN,	*Younger Brothers of the King.*
PEREDURE,	*Younger Brothers of the King.*
ANDRAGIUS,	*British Lords,* — *Governor of Troynovant.*
UTHER,	*British Lords,* — *Governor of Alcluyd.*
GUITHELIN,	*Other British Lords.*
CADWAL,	*Other British Lords.*
KYMBELINE,	*Other British Lords.*
KEYMAR,	*Other British Lords.*
BLEDUNO,	*Other British Lords.*

Citizens—Soldiers—Guards—Forester, etc.

WOMEN.

GUNEGIL,	*Cousin of King Elidure, and betrothed to him.*
BRENNA,	*A Lady, her attendant.*

The scene lies partly at Caer-Leir (now Leicester), and partly in Sherwood Forest.

ACT I.

Scene First.

CAER-LEIR (OR LEICESTER)—THE BRITISH PALACE.

In front of it enter UTHER *and* ANDRAGIUS *meeting.*

Andrag. Uther! a miracle—a miracle!
Uther at court!
Uther. I must confess, Andragius,
'Tis not a face is seen there every day.
Old friend and camp-fellow, I 'm glad to see thee.
How wear'st thou?—Well, I see.—We have not met—
Andrag. These long eight years,—not since King Morin's death.
Uth. So, thou hast left thy towers of Troynovant,
I doubt not, on the errand that hath brought me
A longer march from Alcluyd.
Andrag. Thou hast guessed it.—
How fare our kindly cousins of the North,
The Scots and Picts?
Uth. Oh! at their ancient pastime,
Cutting each other's throats.

Andrag. The Gods to speed them!
They 're very well employed. They do thy work,
And save thee soldiers' hire.
Uth. Nay, faith, Andragius,
They give me quite enough to do, albeit,
And but scant time for April fooleries,
Like those have brought us here.
Andrag. Now, Uther! out on thee!
Thou 'rt grown a churl. Wouldst thou begrudge a week
To talk of old adventures with thy friends,
And see thy king put on his royal bonnet?
Uth. Nay, nay, thou know'st I 'm loyal to the bone,
And one, besides, was ne'er accounted backward
To drain a beaker with an ancient friend.
But tell me, pray thee, how it comes to pass—
For we are outland yonder, and know little
Of your court-doings in the South,—our king
Delayed so long to put that bonnet on?
Why hath he sat these long five years uncrowned?
Andrag. That is a riddle i' the expounding which,
Your wise men of the court are not resolved,
But read it different ways. Some say a vow,
That as he sits upon his brother's stool,
Wherefrom that brother was so rudely forced,
He would for penance sit five years uncrowned:—
Others give out it is some prick o' the conscience
Would not permit him wear his brother's bonnet
Until he knew the rightful owner dead:—
While others whisper it is nothing but

A green and girlish phantasy of love
He built a vow upon.

Uth. A vow!—what vowed he?

Andrag. That he would ne'er put on his royal bonnet
Until the lady Gunegil, his cousin,
Was crowned with him his Queen.

Uth. And would she not?

Andrag. Not, it would seem, till now. I've heard it said
There's somewhere in your far-off Northern parts
A fort they've named *The Maiden*, for that though
Besieged ofttimes it never hath been carried.
Methinks the Lady Gunegil had nearly
Matched it in fame,—a second maiden fortress,—
She's stood our worthy king a five years' wooing.

Uth. Indeed—ha! ha! Then by my sooth, Andragius,
I'll tell thee what, his father, stout King Morin,
Would not have sieged so long—

Andrag. Nor would not neither,
His elder brother Artegal, albeit,
His way of wooing, though compendious,
Was o' the costly—for he paid his kingdom,
'Tis known, in reckoning for his one night's dalliance.

Uth. Known, didst thou say? I never heard of it.
'Twas not for that he was disthroned, I think—
As I remember me, it was not articled
Among the grievances that ye set forth
In his discrowning act.

Andrag. Nor needed not.
There was enough without. But 'twas the latest—
And 'tis the last sod doth undam the torrent.

Uth. What dost thou point at?

Andrag. His attempt to Tarquin it
On the fair daughter of the Duke of Cornwall.

Uth. 'Twas then but in attempt—it was not perfected—

Andrag. The deed was done, though not upon the victim
The doer meant it for.

Uth. Thou speakest oracles—
I am no Druid, pray unriddle me.

Andrag. Then thus it was. The fame of Guendolen,
The only daughter of the Cornish Duke,
Trumpeted lavishly by those lewd lords
Swarmed in the hot-bed of his court, resolved him
To judge the damsel's beauty for himself.
So o' the sudden, under cope of night,
The Duke then absent on the king's affairs,
He knocks him at his gate—is by the Duchess
Hosted as fits a king—in quittance whereof
Hot from the banquet, maddened by her beauty,
That night he would enforce fair Guendolen
To be his bed-fellow. The wily mother,
Her prayers failing to amend his purpose,
Affects compliance, and with tears and bribes,
Wins a young damsel, one of her handmaidens,
To take her daughter's place. The chamber darked,
As 'twere to spare the blushes of a maid,
Till morning came the brutish ravisher
Wist not of the exchange.

Uth. And when he did?

Andrag. His victims had escaped. They fled at midnight
Upon their fleetest steeds, and reached the camp,

Where most o' the Southern chiefs were then assembled.
The fiery Duke, with malisons of vengeance,
Proclaimed his wrong. It needed but his breath
To blow the fire of discontent to blazing,
Had so long smouldered sullenly, and whereto
The frantic prince was daily heaping fuel,
By mad misgovernance—We did disthrone him—

Uth. And made a blest exchange. Their father Morin
Was, as thou knowest, a life-long paradox—
A mass and medley of repugning attributes—
Half angel and half devil—Brutal and brave—
Liberal of largess, yet a wholesale robber—
A maker of wise laws, trampling himself
The laws of earth and heaven! A loving father,
Yet reckless in what neighbour's nest was laid
The egg his chick was hatched from.

Andrag. Thou hast limned him
And to the life—the Manichæan's fable,
In one authentic and incarnate compound—
And his two natures seems as he devised,
To his two elder sons dividedly—
The devil half to Artegal—to Elidure
Whate'er he took of heaven, to which th' inheritor
Makes daily rare augment—more worthy prince,
In battle braver, yet more vowed to peace,
Wiser in council, yet more modest, humble,
Ne'er sat the British throne.

Uth. So all report him.
How reads the promise of the younger princes,
Viden and Peredure?

Andrag. They 're little known yet.
Their port is plausible. But in thine ear—
For 'tis a safe one—let me whisper it,
I fear me they have more of Artegal
Than of the better brother—

Uth. Hush ? he's here,
Already graithed for the great hunting-match
In Sherwood forest.

(*Enter* KING ELIDURE *in his hunter's dress.*)

Elidure. Uther ! Andragius !
Not in your hunter's busk yet ! sooth, my lords,
Were ye so laggards in your graver service,
I were not safe to trust me to your keeping
My kingdom's keys, Alcluyd and Troynovant.
I fear, Lord Uther, thou wilt scorn our sport
As childish pastime, tame and trivial,
When thou bethinkest thee of thy following quarry
I' the forest depths of woody Caledon,
Odin or Hercules had been fain to strike at,
The snow-white savage with his lion's mane,
And horn and hoof like burnished ebony,—
For once content thee with less perilous pastime,
And hunt our Sherwood deer. Away, my lords,
Or ye will be too late. [*Exeunt severally.*

———

Scene Second.

SHERWOOD FOREST.

Enter in travelling attire GUNEGIL *and* BRENNA.

Brenna. Alas! dear lady, thou art much forspent,
Thou 'rt trembling all and pale! 'twere best return,—
The forest 's endless.
Guneg. Spy'st thou not that well yet—
We should be near the place?
Brenna. Ah! here it is—
A fairy fount! with water clear as crystal,
Basined and bubbling in a rocky cave!
Guneg. It is the Holy Well. Our journey's ended—
The Druid's cave is scant two bowshots off.
(*She drinks some water from the Well—then seats herself by its brink, leaning her head sadly on her hand.*)
Brenna. Ah! dear lady,
Thou hast, I fear me, overtasked thy strength.
Guneg. I fear so, too, Brenna, tho' not to straining
The fleshy fibre that a night's sound sleep
Is all specific for, but overtasked
The mind, for the mind's work. It is not weariness
Doth make me tremble thus. 'Tis that I am
In fear to learn that which I came to know,
In fear to meet whom I have come to find.
Brenna. Let us return then.
Guneg. Nay, that were worse still—
I'll see the holy man I came to question,

Albeit, howe'er he answer me, alike
Will dole me misery.

Brenna. Then why, dear lady,
If there be misery in knowing, seek
Knowledge at all?

Guneg. Because in ignorance
There is more misery still. I am affianced
In three short days to be—

Brenna. The honoured Queen
Of Britain's honoured Lord—

Guneg. Whose elder brother—

Brenna. Was thy first love—

Guneg. My first, last, only, Brenna.

Brenna. Nay, vow not so. Thou 'st mourned him and to spare.
Had ye been wedded, five long years of widowhood
Had been an overdue.

Guneg. Ah! Brenna! Brenna!
But thou hast never loved.

Brenna. Then have I spent
My term of teenhood a most unthrift scholar:
—But let that pass—to my poor reckoning,
King Elidure is thine affianced husband,
Doth show as love-worth to a woman's eye
As did his elder brother.

Guneg. But the heart,
Brenna, thou knowest, doth not always follow
Th' appraisure of the sense.

Brenna. Then must it image it
The fair proportions of that inward shape

That is invisible, save by the shadow
It dials on the life ;—and thereby judged
Doth not the second brother pass the first,
As doth a saint—(*Gunegil looks displeased.*)
Nay, dearest lady, pray thee
Be not offended by mine idle speech ;
Out on this foolish tongue that evermore
Outgallops wit !

Guneg. 'As doth a saint a devil.'
So hadst thou ended it—so preach they all—
Thou dost but iterate the cuckoo call,
These five long years hath rung it in mine ear.
They tell me that he was imperious,
Lawless, and libertine, and prodigal,—
I know not what !—
Alas ! it may be so ! what poison-power
There may inhabit in a regal crown
Dropt hastily on the unseasoned brow
Of a hot stripling, thou nor I, Brenna,
Can rightly judge us of. That Artegal
Had faults, and heavy ones—it may be so—
He was a man, a young man, and a prince ;
But that he was the wretch they libelled him—
The heartless wretch—I, who did know his heart
From boy to man, and to its kernelled core,
I'll not believe it—not though Archimail,
The holy Druid doth inhabit here,
Himself had sworn to it.

Brenna. Grant he were lied on,
What boots it ?—he is dead.

Guneg. How knowest thou?
'Tis that hath brought me here; I would learn surely
If he be dead or no.

Brenna. No one hath heard of him
These long three years, and 'tis concluded certain
He died of accident or violence
Among the Danes, the Saxons, or the Scots,
To whom, 'tis known, he went appealing aid
To win him back his crown.

Guneg. Within that time
The holy Druid, Archimail, assured me
That he was living, and, besides, did pledge him
If he were dead by a concerted token
To warn me of his death.

Brenna. And he hath not?—

Guneg. I have received no sign.

Brenna. Say he were living,
What boots it, lady?—art thou not affianced—
Hast thou not plighted faith to wed another
Ere three short suns have set?

Guneg. Ah! wo is me!
'Tis even so—his brother, too!—his brother!
Oh, it is monstrous and unnatural!

Brenna. Guessed not King Elidure the why so long
Thou hast denied his suit?

Guneg. Nor none, Brenna,
Save but thyself alone. These long five years
I have, thou know'st, withstood his patient love,
His pale and pleading looks, until at length
A nation's murmurs that proclaimed me cruel,

Capricious, heartless—more prevailing still,
A weeping mother on her dying bed
Wrung from my lips a cold-constrained consent—
Even thou, too, Brenna—

Brenna. Nay, dear lady, nay,
Say it not chidingly. In love I did it.

Guneg. So did they all. They did it all in love.
And when they spake of Elidure and made
Poor Artegal the foil whereby to brighten him,
Alas! they knew not of the spring they touched,
Nor how it tortured here! The worth of Elidure
Doth but fine-edge my bosom's misery.
I may not love him, and I cannot find
Excuse or argument for hating him.

Brenna. Hast thou bethought thee of some act will follow
That knowledge gained thou comest here to seek?

Guneg. Alas, no, Brenna! I 've fore-purposed nothing—
And there 's my folly's proof. 'Tis but a fancy
Nursing hath fed to fever. I would know
Ere I am life-bound to a loathed bed,
If I do wrong the living Artegal.

Brenna. But what, dear lady, if the holy Druid
Be dead himself—

Guneg. That thought hath crossed me, too,
I 'll know the worst at once—let's to his dwelling.

[*Exeunt into the Forest.*

Scene Third.

THE SAME. A GLADE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE DRUID'S CAVE.

Enter MODRED *in Druid's dress—a long white robe with a yellow girdle; his brow encircled with a chaplet of oak leaves; beard spreading into mustachios, depending to his waist; a white rod in his right hand, and the adder-stone* (ovum anguinum) *suspended from his neck. In his left hand he holds a scroll as if he had just been reading it.*[1]

Modred. 'Tis so, mine honoured master!—it is so!
And thou hast taught me true. In this, thy testament,
Though dead, thou talk'st with me, voicing thy wisdom
In the still woods into my spirit's ear!
This day my vow expires—my three years' penance—
My three years' privilege—thou didst appoint me—
To live a learner in these blessed woods
Conning the Druid's lore—and now I 'm free
To look once more upon the face of heaven
Without this boughy screen, and mingle me
In the hot hives where buzzing multitudes
Honey their winter bield.
Am I then weary of ye, oh ye woods!
Whose hospitable roof received and sheltered me,

---

[1] NOTE.—Originally the Druid doctrine was taught by oral instruction only. At a later period, and when the Greek characters became known, t was communicated by means of writing. CÆSAR VI. 14.

A blighted, banished man !—from whose deep shrines,
Wombed in the awful solitude of shades,
The voice of truth came whispered to my soul,
Healing and heavenly ? And native here
Ye herbs and roots and flowers, whose hidden virtues
My daily study did make knowledge pastime,
And pastime knowledge, must I leave you too ?
No, no, we shall not part ! Mine honoured master,
Turning his penance into pleasure, here
Thy scholar penitent shall make his rest,
Nor ask a happier home ! For the lewd bed,
My couch shall be of the unchiselled rock,
Berries and roots shall be my luxuries ;
My beverage the unfermenting spring
That brews no fever in his brain doth drink it.
Ambition ! Love ! the two last lingering devils
Did battle for my soul—I have at length,
With arms of proof from heaven's own armoury,
—Penance and prayer—triumphed and cast ye out !
Who hath mine heritage doth brook 't more worthily
Than I its once possessor. Let him keep it :—
He hath the holier claim.—And Gunegil !
That was the harder task.—But (*looking out*) strangers—ha !
Damsels ! and wandering in these woods alone !
Immortal Sun !— but is it possible ?—
It is—'tis she herself ! Why comes she thus
To mock my glorying, and put to the proof,
The overproof, my green, unriped resolve ?
But will she know me ? These mine altered looks
By Druid abstinence and sallowing years,

Of sylvan savageness untimely old,—
And this my learned garb—this beard—this mantle—
No, no, she will not know me. Then it may be
That, faint and famished, they have lost their way
Amid the forest's tangled leafery.
They 're wending towards the cave. What hospitality
Its rudeness yields I may not shrink to offer them,
Though it do force mine unfirmed constancy
To a too sudden proof. [*Exit.*

Scene Fourth.

ENTRANCE OF THE DRUID'S CAVE—IN FRONT OF IT MODRED, GUNEGIL, AND BRENNA.

Guneg. Then, holy Druid, is our errand done.
Brenna, let us return. How long, I pray thee,
Hath Archimail been dead?

Modred. Eight moons have changed
Since I did lay him underneath the oak—
Richest of misletoe, that this our forest
Bears in its central gloom, the spot he chose
To be his resting-place.

Guneg. Green be his grave!
His holy deeds descend in dews upon it,
And blessings be his epitaph! Come, Brenna,
There is no help.

Modred. Thou look'st in trouble, lady!
Albeit unworthy to bear up the robe

Of my late honoured master, yet have I,
From the rich harvest of his daily converse,
Gathered some grains of knowledge that may medicine
To a sick soul. And if my scholaring
Reach not to thy disease, at least assure thee
Of secret lips and sympathy.

(GUNEGIL *shakes her head despondingly.*)

Brenna. Dear lady!
Pray thee be counselled of this holy man.
He may resolve thee all. For we, whose ken
Is circumscribed by the low bourne of sense,
Reck but imperfectly of theirs who read
The stars, the storms, the meteors—construing
By learned signs things that exceed the rendering
Of unanointed eyes. If Archimail
Resolved thy question, may not this his scholar?

Guneg. Well, Brenna, be it so, then:—Three years gone,
Thy master, holy Druid! did assure me
One then was living had been long deemed dead,
—A friend was dear to me:—and he did promise
To timely token me if he were dead.
No sign hath come to me. But Archimail
Himself is dead—and thou, I fear me, know'st not
If he I mean—if—(*hesitating.*)

Modred. The Prince Artegal—

Guneg. Ha! then thou know'st it all—the whence or how
I may not question thee. But since thou know'st it,
Doubtless thou know'st, besides, I am affianced
Another's bride ere three fleet suns have set:
His brother Elidure's—

Modred. The bride of Elidure!
And ere three suns have set?
Guneg. Alas! alas!
Druid, 'tis even so. And thou, as by
Thy look of horror I too surely read,
Dost count it sin.
Modred. Sigh'st thou, and say'st Alas?
Art thou not willingly a royal bride?
Guneg. Willingly, Druid! I who loved his brother,—
And love him still,—and save but Artegal
Shall never love another!
Modred. Doth the king
Enforce thee, knowing this, to wed with him?
Guneg. No, Druid, no. He knows not that I loved
His banished brother: nor doth none besides
Save but this maid and thou. For long five years
Meekly he yielded to each feigned plea
I countered to his suit—and would so still,
But that a nation's cry called shame on me.—
The earnest prayers of a dying mother—
At length have wrung from me—
Modred. But is not he
Whom thou dost wed, the worthier brother, lady?
And was not Artegal—
Guneg. Whate'er he was,
To me he was most dear—so, Druid, spare him.
Modred. But thou must learn to hear King Elidure
Speak of his brother's faults.
Guneg. I cannot love
King Elidure as should a wedded wife

Her wedded lord. But, Druid, even to him
I will not be unjust. He loved his brother,
He loves and mourns him still. And from the rout—
The rebel rout, did hurl him from his throne—
'Twas Elidure, with his opposèd breast,
Shielded his brother's life. It was perforce
They made him king ; but they could not enforce him
To don his brother's crown, till now that rumour
Reports that brother dead. And it is this
I fain would know of thee,—when I become
The wife of Elidure if I do wrong
The living Artegal.

Modred (walks about for some time much agitated, at last appearing to have mastered his emotion.)—

Lady ! thy question, doubtless, may be answered ;—
Nor doth it pass the means of present knowledge
I hold me master of. But there are rites
Must be performed, which but the Druid's eye,
None else, may look upon. Brief while repose ye
Within that inner cave, where such poor luxuries
As this rude forest renders, will repair
Your travel's weariness, while I obtain
Your question due reply. [*Exeunt severally.*

Scene Fifth.

THE SAME.

(*Another glade. Enter* MODRED.)

Modred. How fair she is!—how heavenly fair! transcending
The angel promise of her girlhood's beauty,
And all my fancy imaged her in dreams
These long five years!—And yet she loves him still.
The banished, blasted Artegal, whose name
Lives in a nation's memory but as byeword
To synonyme with shame!—And must I now
Resign her to another's arms—a rival's—
A brother's—Yet how nobly hath that brother
Deported him in this! Oh, Elidure! Albeit
Thou never hast been schooled in that high lore
Is shrined within these woods, yet dost thou still
Outwise, outworth me far, asserting thee
The elder's birthright by an elder's merit.
One only virtue did I share with thee—
Fraternal love—thanked be the Gods! that needs not
Repenting nor reform!

(*Walks about for some time agitated by contending emotions.*)

Thou hast prevailed,
Spirit of Archimail: and I at length
Have found a penance shall atone the past,
A sacrifice whose worth shall snatch the prize

Of glorious virtue even from Elidure,
And strike with wonder the great gods themselves!
(*Walks about for some time musing.*)
But let me veil it in the mystic verse
The Bards and Druids love—for now it needs me—
(*Takes a small roll of parchment from his bosom and writes, —then reads aloud what he has written.*)

'The spirit on this earthly ball,
Erewhile was sinful Artegal,
In a new nature and new name,
Transanimates another frame.
Blest in his change, do not deplore,
The lover thou shalt see no more—
His spirit purged of self, and pure,
Wills thee to wed with Elidure.'

Converse with her might bankrupt my resolve,
And this will spare me it. [*Exit.*

Scene Sixth.

THE SAME AS IN SCENE FOURTH.

(MODRED *is handing the scroll to* GUNEGIL.)

Guneg. May I not now?—
Modred. No, lady, read it not,
Till thou hast reached thy chamber in the palace,
Built by thine ancestor, the good King Lear.
Guneg. (*kneeling.*) Then, holy man! who fill'st so worthily
The holy seat of honoured Archimail,

With thanks, on bended knee, I crave thy blessing,
On one who whatsoe'er this scroll contains,
In its mysterious closure needs it largely.

(*The Druid, much agitated, and shrouding his face in his mantle, lays his hand on her head.*)

O Lady!—Gunegil!—May the great gods
Make thee as happy as thy wish—as mine!

(*To* BRENNA, *who kneels.*)

And thee, too, kindly maid.—Farewell—

Gun. and Brenna. Farewell.

[*Exeunt* GUNEGIL *and* BRENNA.

Modred (*solus.*) Now, Modred, to thy cave! From henceforth thou
Art dead to earthly things. [*Exit into the cave.*

Scene Seventh.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE PRECEDING—A RETIRED GLADE IN THE FOREST.

(*Enter* VIDEN *and* PEREDURE, *with bows and arrows, and in their hunter's dress.*)

Peredure. This is the spot, is it?

Viden. Ay, Peredure,
And fitter place for that we have in hand,
The gods could not invent us. 'Tis so hedged
On either side with underwood, an arrow
Shot peradventure from the woody brush,

Might hit the passer in the open space,
And slay of simple chance—ha! Peredure?
Pered. If peradventure took a cunning aim.
But where left'st thou the king?
Vid. Upon his knees
At the Rocking Stone near by the Druid's grave.
Pered. Oh, at his prayers! Then he 'll not be here
This long hour at the least; and these twin paragons
Of loyalty, Andragius and Uther,
Mine oath to it, will come his pioneers,
Lest some seditious thorn, or traitor bramble,
Prick sacrilegiously anointed flesh,
And tap some royal vein.
Vid. Thou 'lt be mansworn then.
I 've put them off the trail, and on a track
Wherein, with diligence, an their wind fail not,
They may o'ertake the Pole, but not the King.—
Thou art the truer marksman—sconce thee yonder
Behind that huge old oak. Indeed 'twere well
One bolt sufficed—it would awry suspicion,
And show hap-hazard death. But shouldst thou miss him
I will make sure—
Pered. Tush, tush! I ne'er missed yet,
That was my play to hit—nor shall not now
When half a kingdom is the mark I shoot at—
Though 't be the worser half.
Vid. Nay, Peredure,
All north Caerleir—'tis not the worser half.—
Pered. 'Tis far—
Vid. Then blame the gods—their lot determined it.

Pered. An equal venture should give equal vantage—
To right the balance thou 'lt not grudge to me
Our cousin for my wife, when my good arrow
Hath cracked her bond and made a spinster of her.

Vid. Nay, Peredure, our cousin Gunegil
Hath in her veins the pure Molmutian blood;
Whereas, 'tis known, our granddame, Tanquestela,
Without the Druid's blessing, was a mother—
This ink-blot in our blood the brother weds her
O'ershoots equality.

Pered. Must she be halved too?
Or must we ballot her, that so the gods,
Who ever side with thee, may choose for us?

Vid. Nay, Peredure, thou 'rt talking wildly now,
Wronging the gods and me.—She is not chattels—
She hath a will—But hush! the king is here—
No, curses on him! 'Tis the Druid burrows
In Archimail's old hole!—Our game is up
If we not hence decoy him speedily. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Eighth.

ANOTHER GLADE NEAR THE FORMER.

(*Enter* VIDEN *and* PEREDURE, *in conversation with* MODRED.)

Viden. Indeed, his playfellow, and bosom friend,
Our late King Artegal's?

Modred. One day, one hour
To daylight ushered us. I' the joyous sports

Of careless boyhood we were playmates ever :—
And though the pitying gods have anchored me
At length a happy convertite, within
The quiet haven of these blessed woods,
I was his sharer and his co-offender
In his most riotous and sinful youth.

Vid. Thou lovedst him, Druid, didst thou?

Modred. As myself.

Vid. And when they hurled him from his throne—their act
How didst thou deem of it?

Modred. I judged it treason.

Vid. Then must thou hate his murderer as we do.

Modred. His murderer—

Vid. Did first usurp his crown,
Then to secure him in his robbery,
Harried the owner's life.

Modred. He had three brothers—
As I remember me—whereof the second
Inherited—

Vid. He is the murderer.

Modred. Immortal Bel!—But no—ye jest with me.

Vid. Assure thee, Druid, 'tis no jesting matter—
We're here to venge him on his murderer,
This very day is hunting in this forest.

Modred. Ye're come to slay him—

Vid. Ay—

Modred. And how?

Vid. By ministers
Need few instructions—will obey them nicely—
Require no bribing—will betray no secrets—

Dumb but decided doers—our good arrows.
If so thou lovedst King Artegal, herein
Thou mayest our helper be.

Modred. How may I help you?

Vid. Dispose the body in thy cave, as struck
By a chance arrow from the thicket, shot
At peradventure from some hunter's bow
In the hot hurry of the forest chase:—
And when we guide the search for him that way
Quote us this tale as from his lips, when he
Crawled to thy cave for help, a dying man.

Modred (*aside, and walking apart from them*)—
Immortal gods! his brothers! his own brothers!

Vid. What art thou muttering, Druid?

Modred. That I fear
Your plan's unperfectness. Your archery
May leave death incomplete, or need repeating,
And so invite a dangerous scrutiny.
I know a surer way. To those are learned
In Nature's mysteries there lack not means—
The bowelled mineral, or the coy herb
Wons in the ravelled secrecy of woods—
To purchase death, yet leave no outward mark
To track his march the by.—One such I know—
A simple herb is o' the vulgar eye
But little noted, though the wiser sense
Of the sagacious goat doth pass it by
A-shudder, and in haste, the which infused
Into thy cup, albeit to human organ
It hath not taste, nor smell, nor colour,—yet

Is of so subtle and so sudden virtue
That in the instant it doth numb the taker
Into a deadly sleep, from which nor leech
Nor spell of necromaunt can waken him.

Vid. But will not death so strange, thus without evident
Of a foregone natural cause, among his followers
Breed question and surmise?

Modred. It will but seem
As his day's toil in the fierce sun had sent
A fever-flood upon his brain, and drowned
The life inhabits there.—I 'll vouch it so—
Such deaths do happen oft.—Where is the king?

Vid. By tryste he meets us at the Holy Well,
So needs must pass this way.

Modred. Repair ye thither—
I will go fetch the medicine from my cave
And join you there anon. [*Exeunt severally.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

Scene First.

SHERWOOD FOREST—A GLADE.

(*Enter* ELIDURE *in his hunter's dress.*)

Elidure. The spot is holy, and should not be passed
Without a holy act.
What mortal needs not on his daily voyage
The blessing of the gods? and chiefest he
Whose well deport or ill must accident
A kingdom's happiness!—It grieves and crosses me
Good Archimail is dead:—for he was ever,
In nice affairs, my surest councillor:—
And I have that upon my spirit needs
Counsel and comfort too.—She loves me not:—
Though she hath syllabled a cold consent
To my long urgency. It cannot be
A native frostiness of soul is iced
Against th' appeal of love—for heart more rich
In all love kins it with, inhabits not
The gentle breast of woman. I have heard
Of strange antipathies that reason ministers

Nor cause nor cure unto, in things of sound
Or shape, or taste, or smell, that others hold
In liking, or in mere indifferency.
But that it cannot be.—When we were playmates,
I well remember in her girlhood years,
That silent, still, and shy to Artegal,
To me she frankly would unbosom her
As to a brother born. I 've feared at times
That she did love elsewhere. Yet, albeit,
My love, with lynx-eyed jealousy hath watched her
These long five years, I never could detect
Aught that by circumstance might warrant me.
But she 's my bride at last :—for that, at least,
Th' immortal gods be thanked ! Haply their blessing
On the rough stem of duty may engraft
The bud of love, and make it blossom there !
But I 've o'erstay'd my tryste—so the sun warns me.

[*Exit.*

Scene Second.

THE HOLY WELL IN SHERWOOD FOREST.

(*Enter in conversation*, VIDEN, PEREDURE, *and* MODRED.)

Pered. Be sure it worketh cleverly, thy drink,
Druid ! or by the gods—
Viden. Nay, Peredure, beseech thee,
Trust to this learned man. It will not cost us
A painful looking on ?
Modred. No. It will seize

Each several sense swiftly, and yet so softly,
That to the taker as the looker-on,
'Twill seem but slumber upon weariness
Doing its gentle office.

Pered. But his followers—
What if they come too soon?

Vid. They will be here
Just when we want them :—not a moment sooner—
I've seen to that. Andragius and Uther
Will both be of our party at the finding—
And when, by accident, we stumble on't,
We will outclamour them, ha! Peredure,
In wonder and in weeping.

Modred. Be sure ye leave the body in my cave
For a night's space, that I may do thereon
Some needful art shall give it perfectly
The show of natural death.

Vid. Hush! hush! hast thou't
Ready for present use?—I hear him coming.

(*Enter to them* ELIDURE.)

Elidure. Ha, brothers!—We have had brave sport!—I fear me
I've broke my tryste with you.

Vid. We were, in sooth,
Some trifle weary, and do owe thee thanks
For slacking of thy haste. We have had time
To ease our strained limbs.—And this good Druid
Hath cordialled our drouth with beverage,
I do believe me, hath some spell in it
To medicine heat, and thirst, and weariness.

Elid. The Druid, Modred, is it not? (MODRED *bows*)
Good Modred
I've heard of thee, and heard how worthily
Thou sittest in his seat, the teacher friend
Whom I have lost, inheriting his lore,
And with his lore his life. What cordial was 't
My brother speaks of with a gust as though
It were some special vintage.

Modred. Sooth, my liege,
It was a forest simple, nothing more,
Mixed with the water of this blessed spring.
It hath no spell in it, save that it makes
A draught is pleasant and restorative
To him that hath the fever of fatigue
Upon him, or of thirst.

Elid. Then mix me of it,
For I have both on me. Thy master oft
Would lesson me touching the kindly virtue
Lodgeth in forest herbs to medicine
Sick body or sad mind :—as Yarrow stancheth
The freshly flowing wound—and Centaury
Closeth its gashy lips :—Tutsan and Plantane
Do make it kindly heal :—The Adder's-tongue
Sovereign for poisons :—for the racking stone
Hart's-tongue and Saxifrage, and Agrimony
Flowereth its stem with gold :—Valerian
To banish cramps and colics :—for the lungs,
Horehound and Calaminth :—the holy Vervain
Foe to the megrims :—for the melancholics,
Bugloss and Marigold :—Borage and Balm

To comfort the sick heart :—Basil and Betony,
Mallow and Marjoram, and Camomile,
Mugwort and Lavender, and Maiden's Hair,
And thousands more whose uses he would open me,
Making the woods our school, and the wild flowers
Our gentle doctors in philosophy.

Modred. Methinks, my liege, thou art more learned read
In this our forest leech-craft than myself.
Thou 'lt haply name me when thou 'st drained this cup
The herb hath seasoned it.

Elid. Nay, Modred, nay,
I am too shallow read. But give me it,
And I will make assay. This to thy health! (*Taking the cup.*)
I have just visited thy master's tomb
To say mine orisons—I honoured him,
And in these woods made oft resort to him
For converse and for counsel. Be this cup.
'Twixt thee and me pledge of like amity
And kindly neighbourhood!

Modred (*aside*). Ever the same—
Gentle and gracious!

Elid. Viden and Peredure!
To the continuing of our brother's love—
I need not wish it more! (*Drinks off the cup, then sits down.*)
Thy draught feels cold,
Colder than molten snow!—Methinks o' the sudden,
A numb creeps over me, and heaviness
As I would fall on sleep (*yawns*).

Vid. We felt so, too :—

It is the nature of that wondrous weed—
'Twill suddenly pass off.

Elid. A death-cold dimness
Hath overshot mine eyes!—I cannot see you!—
Brothers, where are you?—Ah! I mark you now
As shadows dancing on the unsteady air!
Now dwindled into motes! What herb was that
Thou druggedst my drink with, Druid? I mistrust thee—
I'll be resolved— (*Attempts to rise, but is unable.*)

Pered. (*bending his bow*). Nay, an thou purpose that—

Modred (*seizing his arm*). Hold, in the name of all the gods, rash youth!

Vid. It needs not, Peredure. It 's done our work
More perfectly than could thine archer's art.
See how it deals with him!

(ELIDURE *sinks upon the ground, and seems as gradually falling asleep. He mutters something which is unintelligible, except the words* 'ARTEGAL! ARTEGAL!' *which are several times repeated.*)

Pered. He calls on Artegal!

Modred. On him he murdered!

Vid. Ay. There 's proof to thee
Of that foul deed. It is his conscience speaks—

(*The words* 'GUNEGIL, GUNEGIL!' *are faintly uttered by* ELIDURE.)

Hark! now he names the Princess Gunegil.

Modred. And did he murder her too?

Pered. Nay, Sir Druid.
But for thy medicine he had married her.

Vid. (*after stooping over the body and examining it carefully*)—

Thy work is perfect, Druid. He is dead.
It is too still for sleep. There is nor breath
Nor beat of blood in him. Come, Peredure,
We must go lead our comrades in the search.
Thou, meanwhile, Druid, to thy cave. Remember
The story of his death we have agreed on.
One murdered king thou hast avenged this day,
And made two living ones thy friends and debtors.

[*Exeunt* VIDEN *and* PEREDURE.

Modred (*solus*). It is no fable that our Druids preach.
That the immortal soul doth shift its lodge
And life successive forms. For there are twain
Ripe to endow with breath the fellest pair
That wolf or tiger twins! yea, to infuse in them
Nature more savage and more devilish
Than wolf or tiger heirs! The tiger's cub
Tears not his womb-fellow; but these more fell
Would murder their own brother!
And such a brother! one whose gentleness
Had tamed the madman in his frothing fit,
Disarmed the starving robber on the heath,
Moved from his purpose at his vantage hour
The vengeful enemy had sworn his death—
Nay, stayed his daggered arm, and thawed to mercy
The sternest ruffian lives on murder's fee!
Oh! thou hast reft me of my dearest rights—
The bed of Gunegil—the royal staff
Of Britain, Elidure! yet would not both.

With earth's wombed wealth to boot, have tempted me
To do the damned deed!
As I do gaze on thee
My soul is in the past, and memory
Doth summer-flood mine eye! Away—away—
It is no time for tears—for I must doff
The Druid now, and for a season don
The doer and the darer. That's to do
Will task my whole of man. There's pharmacy
Needs sure compounding I must have in readiness. [*Exit.*

(*Enter* VIDEN, PEREDURE, ANDRAGIUS, UTHER, CADWAL, KYMBELINE, *and other Chiefs.*)

Uther. To north of there, my lord, he cannot be,
Else had he heard our call. Where left ye him?
Vid. At th' tomb of Archimail, whither he went
In payment of a vow to make his orisons—
But that's some two hours past.
Cadwal. He is not there.
For, guessing that he might be purposed so,
Myself and Kymbeline repaired us thither.
Returning thence we've searched each glade and thicket,
Sounding our call till the whole forest rung to 't,
Yet gained us no reply.
Vid. 'Tis passing strange!
Kymbeline (*advancing towards the Holy Well*)—
The gods be thanked—he's here!—and fast asleep.
Uth. And very fast too, Kymbeline, I warrant me,
Else our réveillé had awakened him.
Kymb. Slumber so still I ne'er before did look on.

Vid. Fatigue hath overcome him.

Uth. (*stooping over the body*). Nay, my lord,
This sleep, I do not like it. Look, Andragius,
'Tis as a statue slept.

Andrag. It is, indeed—
This is not natural sleep.

Pered. Sound him, Lord Kymbeline,
A peal upon thine horn,—if it be sleep
'Twill scare it suddenly.

(KYMBELINE *sounds a loud blast; the other Lords crowd anxiously round the body.*)

Uth. He starts not—stirs not—hears not!—see, my lord,
It trembles not the lightest feather held
Before his breathless lips. The stiffened wrist
Heaves not in answer to the living touch—
There is no motion in these rigid limbs—
There is no meaning in that fixed eye—
This is not natural sleep, the sleep that life
Inhabits in abeyance, but I fear me
The sleep that hath no dream and knows no wakening.

Vid. Uther! it cannot be. I'll not believe it—
Awake thee, Elidure! my lord—my brother!
Alas! alas! and yet, my lords, look here,
There is no mark of violence upon him:
No sign bespeaks enforced or struggling death—
How think'st thou, Peredure?

Pered. Alas! my brother!
But yet there is no mark.

Vid. I do believe
'Tis but some fit surprised him; learned art

Might yet recover him. Oh, were his friend
Alive, the Druid, Archimail—
Cadwal. His scholar
Wons in his cave hard by, and he is counted
A holy man and learned.
Vid. Ha! Modred—true,
I had forgotten him. These Druids are
Master-mediciners. To Modred's cave
Remove him softly, friends. Come, Peredure,
We will advise the Druid of their coming,
That he be ready with his means of art.

[*Exeunt* VIDEN *and* PEREDURE.

(*The others prepare to remove the body.*)

Scene Third.

INTERIOR OF THE DRUID'S CAVE.

(*In the background the body of* ELIDURE *laid out,* VIDEN *and* PEREDURE *hanging over it, their faces covered. The* DRUID *walks restlessly up and down, stealing, occasionally, a look at the two princes. Near the entrance,* ANDRAGIUS, UTHER, CADWAL, *and* KYMBELINE, *their countenances expressing deep sorrow. After a short time* VIDEN *and* PEREDURE *come forward.*)

Vid. Lords, ye have lost a king, a gracious one,
And we a loving brother. Him lies there,
There is not present would not with his life
Have stood betwixt and death. Alas! our loves
Avail him nothing now!—the gods have stricken him

And not a mortal arm, as this good Druid,
With learned reasons hath instructed us.
We are their homagers, and 'mid our tears
We may not ask them why. And lest this realm
Lapse into mere misrule, we, on whose heads
Unworthed, unwished, the blessed gods have laid
The weight of royalty, must haste return
To Caerleir, whither we crave your following,
To testify the manner of this death,
And aid our newness with your ripe experience.
Have thou our brother's dear remains, good Druid,
Thy lodger for this night, which we, to-morrow,
Shall hence with reverence and due obsequies.

Andrag. Till then, my lord, we wait upon the dead
Uther and I—

Vid. Nay, nay—we prize your love
And loyal duty, gentle lords, but may not
In this our exigent forego the profit
Of your wise counsel.

Uther. Shall this honoured dust
Was late our royal lord, lie in this hole
Ungraced with reverence, as though it were
Some outcast's offal?

Modred. Thou mis-mannered lord!
Talk not so loftily. Give Druids watch
On the unhonoured dead? I tell thee, lord,
The love I bore to him is sleeping there
Did more than equal thine—ay, though thou lovedst him
As thine own brother, as thine only brother
Born at one birth with thee, thy twinned womb-fellow,
And I will tend him with as reverent love!

Vid. Beseech ye suffer it, lords both. We need
Your presence with us in the State's affairs.
He is in faithful and in holy charge—
Beseech ye follow us. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Fourth.

THE FOREST.

(VIDEN, PEREDURE, KYMBELINE, *and* CADWAL *pass across the scene and exeunt.* ANDRAGIUS *and* UTHER *remain behind.*)

Uther. Doth it not seem a dream—a horrid dream,
Andragius, all this?
Andrag. We've lost this day
A monarch and a man unparagoned.
Uther. And gained us two—
Andrag. Blackhearted bloody villains.
Uther. Aha! Andragius, doth thy fancy squint
That horrid way too?
Andrag. Uther—they murdered him.
Uther. I think they did, Andragius. Yet, albeit,
I did observe the body carefully,
Sharpening my scrutiny with my suspicion,
Nor sign nor circumstance might I detect
To warrant me in proof.
Andrag. Didst thou mark nothing
Wakened conjecture in the Druid's bearing?
Uther. It was mysterious, and seemed to me

It pieced not perfectly. For while he vaunted
In vehement phrase the marvellous love he bore
To the dead king, his looks methought wore not
The earnest impress of an honest sorrow.
They spake a language I could not unriddle :—
Triumph, it seemed, blended with lofty scorn,
Rather than grief or guilt.

Andrag. Didst thou not mark, too,
How nicely jointed to a common story,
The prince's questions and the Druid's answers?

Uther. Ha! now thou dost recall it me—'twas so—
'Twas so, indeed!

Andrag. They would not let us watch
The murdered body in the Druid's cave,
Lest we should look too close. In roots and herbs,
Sovereign to hurt or heal, that grow awild
In forest or in field, old Archimail,
This Druid's master, had no peer for knowledge;
Such as do kill by spasmy violence,
Leaveth its written mark, or numb the sense
With sudden lethargy, to the observer
Betrays no sign, but slides from sleep to death.
I doubt his scholar was their partner here,
Their doer and their deadly instrument!

Uther. He was—past doubt he was; but what to do?
Dunwallo's lineage taketh end with these—
Gorbonian is dead, and Artegal—
They 've murdered Elidure. Must we kneel fealty
To fiends and fratricides?

Andrag. There is their cousin—

'Tis due to her. Their father, though first-born
Of King Elanius, was by Tanguestele
His concubine, while Gunegil's father,
Though second born, was by a lawful bed.

Uther. Oh, were she but a man, Andragius,
But doth 't not tumble nature's ordinance,
A woman should rule men?

Andrag. The laws we quote
With freeman's pride our Briton's privilege
We owe a woman-king, her great-granddame
In her son's nonage ruled this realm, Queen Marcia.

Uther. We do, Andragius. To the winds then
Fling we our banners for the Briton's Queen!
Haste thou to Troynovant, and call around thee
The faithful of the south—while I, meanwhile,
From the dusk shores of great Lyncallidor [1]
And Alcluyd's rocky crest to the Maiden's Mount,
Rally the loyal spirits of the North
To wrench her sceptre from these bloody brothers.

Andrag. Remember, Uther, we have yet no proof,
So we must don the cloak of policy
Until we have. Watch we the while events
With eye and ear more open than our thought,
And that we purpose let it rest unknown
Save to ourselves and to the blessed gods.
Away—or crafty Viden will suspect us. [*Exeunt.*

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[1] Lyncallidor was the ancient name for Lochlomond. Alcluyd (or Al-Cluith, the rock on Clyde) is now Dumbarton—the Maiden's Mount (Mount Agned), Edinburgh. Alcluyd and Mount-Agned are said to have been built by King Ebrauc, the great-grandson of Brut, the fabled founder of the British name and monarchy.

ACT III.

Scene First.

THE PALACE IN CAERLEIR—AN APARTMENT.

(*Enter* VIDEN.)

Viden. When crosses come they ever come in clusters!
Howe'er I play the king 'tis past a doubt
I am mere bungler in the lover's craft.
What devil of my better wits bereft me
With so fool-sudden haste, death's messenger
To play in one the mourner and the lover,
And woo the dead man's bride! I have mine answer—
Oracular yet not equivocal!
No minced *Nay* is but a *Yea* deferred,
No phrase may construe into Will or Won't—
But plump denial served for seasoning
With sermonizing scorn!
This cursed council!
Would it might be put off! But 'tis too late,
There 's no escaping it. She hates my brother—
At least I think she does. There is my hope—
(*Walks about uneasily.*)

What can it be detains them in the forest!

(*Enter* PEREDURE.)

Not yet returned?—(PEREDURE *shakes his head dissentingly*)—
What can it be, think'st thou?

Pered. I never liked him from the first, thy Druid.
Would our own business we had done ourselves!
The meat is marred hath had too many cooks—
The sick man dangered hath too many doctors—
The plot is safest is to fewest known;
I doubt thy Druid plays the knave with us.
And then that rangal rout,—my curse on them!
As through the choke-full streets I pushed my way,
With insolent clamour shouted after me
'Show us our king—the body of our king.'

Vid. I fear'd it would be so. It will misvantage us—
Would they were come, and now—
For 'tis the hour we fixed to hear our cousin
Declare her choice before the lords in council.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene Second.

THE COUNCIL HALL.—VIDEN AND PEREDURE OCCUPY CHAIRS OF STATE—ANOTHER CHAIR BETWIXT THEM LEFT VACANT. BELOW, LORDS SEATED AT THE COUNCIL-TABLE—THE HALL CROWDED WITH SPECTATORS.

(*Enter* GUNEGIL, *followed by* UTHER *and* ANDRAGIUS, *the two latter seating themselves with the other lords at the council-*

table. As GUNEGIL *enters* VIDEN *and* PEREDURE *rise from their seats.*)

Vid. (*pointing to the vacant chair*)—
Here is thy place, fair cousin.
Guneg. Pardon me,
I have no claim to it, my lords. I'm here
A simple subject of the realm, to do
A brief and simple duty.

(*Seats herself at the bottom of the council-table, facing* GUITHELIN *the president.*)

Guithelin. Suffer it,
Beseech ye, good my lords. It does in sooth
Conform it strictlier to our British usage
Till she hath made her choice. (*The princes bow assent.*)
(*To* GUNEGIL.) Lady, thou knowest
The cause this day convenes our solemn council.—
Our gracious lord, the good king Elidure,
With loving hearts we honoured, from our loves
The blessed gods have suddenly removed.
To bar divisions, waving controversy,
His royal brothers have resolved, right brotherly,
To share his realm in fair equality:—
And for that thou, but for this fatal chance,
Hadst been our Britain's queen, whose honoured place
They've charged me say it so—thy birth, thy beauty,
Thy princely gifts and virtues had twice honoured,
They tender thee to freely choose betwixt them
And be again a queen—to us impledging them
To bide by thine award. Whom choosest thou?

Guneg. Neither.

Guith. Beseech thee, lady, to recall thine answer—
Thou must.

Guneg. Must—must, Lord Guithelin! why must I?
I am a free-born subject of this realm,
Did never hear of British law compelled
A British maid to wed against her will.

Guith. The state's necessity enforceth it.

Guneg. And doth the state's necessity enforce
An outrage to the dead? This very day
Was fixed my bridal with king Elidure.
The gods, thou say'st, have suddenly removed him—
Of that I have no proof. Yet ere I've shed
A woman's tears over a cousin's corse,
With forehead unabashed and haste unholy
Thou bidd'st me wed another, and that other
The brother of the dead!

Vid. Nay, nay, fair cousin,
We do but ask thee now to make election;
As for the ritual, it may be delayed
How long soe'er thou wilt.

Guneg. Till I have looked
On the dead body of the king, Lord Guithelin,
Answer save that thou hast already had
Hope not to have from me.

Andrag. Pray thee, Lord Guithelin,
Hath it not been the custom of this realm
To show the body of our kings deceased
For a day's space, and publicly?

Guith. It hath,

And a wise reason governed it.

Andrag. What reason?

Guith. To satisfy his people their king's death
Was the gods' ordinance, not hasted foully.

Vid. But now this needeth not. Ye were with us,
Lords Uther and Andragius, and can testify
The manner of his death. Ye were of them
Removed his body to the Druid's cave.
Ye heard that learned man expound and clearly
It was the gods' own act.

Uther. The people murmur,
Denied their ancient privilege.

Guith. Methinks
To slight old usage in this thing, my lords,
It were not policy. Pray ye consent.

Vid. There is no law for it.

Guith. No written law—

Vid. Customs still change with changing circumstance—
And that were now but idle ceremony,
Was wisdom once, perchance necessity.
This zeal for privilege, I doubt, fair cousin,
Is but thy woman's art—a trick of policy
Evades our question. Wilt thou not deign answer it
Appealed this second time?

Guneg. I've answered twice,
To that same question—'tis methinks enough.

Pered. Nay, gentle cousin, 'twas but once, I think.

Guneg. Once publicly, and now,—and once when he,
His brother's death scarce messaged from his lips,
Did with unbrotherly, unreverent haste,

Sue me to wed with him.

Pered. Ha! didst thou, Viden!
Then by the blessed gods thou hast played false with me.

Guneg. Lords, have I leave to go?

Guith. Though seems not need,
'Twere best consent, my lords. It will content
This noble lady, satisfy the people,
And due respect our ancient usages.

(*Enter an* OFFICER, *who in an undertone addresses some words to the two princes.*)

Vid. Break up the council for some half-hour's space;
We will consider it. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Third.

AN APARTMENT IN THE COUNCIL HOUSE.

(VIDEN *and* PEREDURE *walking about as if discomposed.*)

Pered. Brother! how think'st thou of thy Druid, now?
For me, I never liked him, nor liked never
A Druid of their drove—I know not why—
The learned call it instinct, do they not?

Vid. Was 't instinct taught Andragius, too, I wonder,
To guess our doings at the Holy Well?
For he hath guessed them past all doubt. That moppet,
Our pretty cousin, did her part so deftly,
Is but his puppet, moved and monitored

To play his policy. And then these news,
These cursed news, will damage us still more.
There's something must be thought on. Kymbeline.

(*Enter* KYMBELINE.)

The cave was tenantless; thou 'rt sure they searched
The forest thoroughly?

Kymb. From end to end,
How thoroughly our more than two days' absence,
Our weariness, worn looks, and garments rent
To robes for ragstaves 'mid the forest brakes,
Will certify for us.

Vid. Chanced ye on none
Had seen the Druid since?

Kymb. Not since the morning
Of that same day. There was a forester
Saw him that morn, in earnest conference
With th' lady Gunegil—

Vid. With whom, saidst thou?

Kymb. The lady Gunegil and her attendant.

Vid. The lady Gunegil! But art thou certain?

Kymb. Though some way off, he watched them curiously,
For there was something in their conference
Did show to him mysterious.

Vid. Couldst thou find me
This forester?

Kymb. He 's here—we brought him with us.

Vid. Go fetch him instantly, good Kymbeline, pray thee.

[*Exit* KYMBELINE.

Evanished both!—and neither to be found,—
The Druid nor the dead! 'Tis passing strange!

But he was doer of the deed, risks most,
And so he dares not peach, methinks, or palter,
Or play the knave with us.
(*Walking about and aside*)—What took her there,
It marvels me, that morn? Aha! fair lady,
I am thy debtor, for some recent favours
Are freshly garnered in a grateful memory,
And shall be due repaid!

Pered. What art thou muttering?

Vid. Methinks I spy our safety-plank at last.
Let 's see this forester and question him. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Fourth.

THE COUNCIL HALL AS IN SCENE SECOND, GUNEGIL ONLY BEING ABSENT.

Vid. 'Twas well, my lords, our meeting was suspended,
For damned things have broke to light since then!
We come not now rivals and suitors, wooing
With amorous plea the soft arbitrament
Of a disputed bride,—but as stern magistrates
To vindicate the violated laws,
As kings appealing justice upon traitors,
As loving brothers to avenge our brother!
'Twas well we craved delay when we were dared
To publicly produce our brother's body;
For had we promised, we had promised that,

They knew who challenged, we could not perform :
Our royal brother has been foully murdered !

(Signs of astonishment and horror from the Council and spectators.)

Guith. Immortal gods ! so well-beloved a king !
Lives there on earth could do so damned deed ?
Be there whom ye accuse ?

Vid. When we have named them,
Our tale so wanders out of likelihood,
So startles faith, so strains the possible,
Ye will denounce us mad—struck with strange lunacy.
Would it were so ! And that 'tis so, we pray you
Believe it, lords, if but by circumstance
Our proof do halt this side of certainty ;—
We'll strive to think some foul possession mocked us.
And in that hope be blest !

Guith. For what strange upshot
Prepares such prefacing ? Who murdered him ?

Vid. The Druid Modred—and alas ! that justice
And stern necessity command me utter it—
The lady Gunegil.

(Looks of astonishment interchanged among the Lords of the Council, and cries of 'Impossible !' 'Impossible !' from the spectators.)

Well may ye say it, friends ! We said so too,
And wrestled angrily with each new circumstance
Rose in demonstrative. The gods be witness,
We have no aim doth need the furthering
Of a well-marshalled proof. Send for the princess ;
Meanwhile the Lords were sent to fetch the body

Will tell you how they sped. Pray thee, Lord Kymbeline,
Report it us.

Kymb. We found the body gone, the cave deserted;
And tho' from morn to night, by two days' space,
We searched the forest through, thicket and glade,
With diligent painfulness, yet found we neither
The Druid nor the dead.

Guith. 'Tis strange, my lords;
I own 'tis passing strange. Still here is nothing
Makes in accusative.

Vid. I' the perfect chain
It is but link the first. Call in the forester.

(*The forester is brought in.*)

This man hath sworn he was in Sherwood Forest
The day whereon befell our brother's death.
Tell us, good forester, what happened there?
Thou sawest the Druid Modred and a lady
That morning, didst thou not? Who was the lady?

Forester. The princess Gunegil—

Vid. Alone?

Forest. Brenna was with her.

Vid. Didst thou not swear thou saw'st the princess kneel.
While solemnly the Druid laid one hand
Upon her head, and with the other dropped
Oil from a golden phial; next upraised
Both hands to heaven as blessing her; then reverently
Knelt in his turn to her.

Forest. Methinks, my lord,
'Twas some such ceremony.

Vid. Observe, my lords,

It is the form the Druid rites require
I' the anointing of a king or queen.
The lady Brenna, did she homage too?
Did she too kneel?

Forest. My lord, I saw her kneel.

Vid. Spy ye nought here, my lords, in probative?

Andrag. Touching the king's death, no. But here 's the lady,
She'll answer for herself.

(*Enter* GUNEGIL, *conducted by* BLEDUNO, *and leaning on* BRENNA'S *arm.*)

I pray thee, lady, on that day whereon
Our late king took his death so suddenly,
Wert thou anointed by the Druid Modred
In Sherwood Forest with the oil is used
In crowning of our kings?

Guneg. Fy, Lord Andragius!
Thy question mocks me.

Andrag. Wert thou there and Brenna
That morning in the forest, with the Druid
In earnest conference?

Guneg. We were, Andragius.

Andrag. And poured he not, from out a golden phial,
Th' anointing oil upon thy head, and blessed thee;
Then on his knees did homage? And this lady,
Did she not witness this, and share in it?

Brenna. If this be jest, my lord, 'tis foolish jesting.

Andrag. But what if it be earnest?

Brenna. Then 'tis worse;
For it is false as foolish.

Andrag. Wilt thou swear it?

Brenna. By th' holiest oath thou canst invent for me.

Andrag. Behold, my lords, here's witness against witness,
And the more credible against the less,
For she was by, and he some distance off.

Vid. Wilt please thee, lady, tell us of the errand
Took thee that morning to the Druid's cave?

Guneg. To mortal man I will not tell that errand.

Andrag. Not to assoil thee from a fearful charge?

Guneg. No—nor thou, Brenna, on thy love I charge thee.

Vid. Touched it thy marriage with the king our brother?
This much at least—

Guneg. Haply in part it might.

Vid. Three days thereafter thou hadst wed with him,
'Tis known unwillingly. Was't not thine errand
How with the Druid's help thou might'st avoid
These loathèd nuptials?

Guneg. Thou rude questioner!
To questioning so vile I yield no answer.

Andrag. Not to absolve thee from a charge of murder?
For 'tis therein they would entangle thee.

Guneg. They know me innocent would snare me guilty.
I cannot wed with both. While I have breath
I will not wed with either. Knowing that,
Howe'er I answer, it may shift the means
But will not change the issue.

Gaith. But to resolve their doubts do wish thee innocent
Yet fear thee guilty.

Guneg. Be there such, Lord Guithelin,
In their good time the gracious gods amend

The error of their thoughts and pardon them.
I will not answer to their questions farther.

Vid. Then be the sequents on thine own head, lady!
We may not flinch our duty to the dead,
How dear soe'er the living head it perils.
How judge ye, lords? Ye've heard the lady's answers—
Her wrung confession—her resolved silence,
And full of matter both:
Her known repugnance to these royal nuptials
On shifting pleas for long five years delayed,
Then all at once so hurriedly consented—
Her sudden visit to the Druid's cave
On that mysterious errand which did touch—
She hath confessed it so—these hated nuptials—
What there fell out, as this good forester,
Of his own witnessing, hath testified,
Th' anointing her from out the golden phial,
The homaging ensued—for I do hold
The lady Brenna her confederate,
And so her vouching void: what sequell'd this?
The king's so sudden and mysterious death
On that same day, near by the Druid's cave,
And but two days before their purposed marriage—
The Druid's flight—the hiding of the body
From our too close and curious scrutiny—
And then that scornful challenge of the lady
So took us with surprise, defying us
To publicly produce that she knew well
It mocked our means to do. Be there circumstance
That charity may hinge construction on,

To hope a doubtful guilt, beseech ye, lords,
Construe it kindly—let it plead for her.

(*After appearing to consult earnestly for some time,* GUITHELIN *and all the lords, except* UTHER *and* ANDRAGIUS, *stand up.*)

Guith. Albeit, with bleeding hearts, we judge it so—
Appears to us, my lords, that both are guilty.

Uther. Guilty, Lord Guithelin! I gage my life on't,
This noble lady is as sakeless clear
Of that foul stain as thou.

Andrag. And I gage mine.

Vid. Ay, ay, misloyal lords? no doubt ye will;
Ye 'll gage your lives, for they are gaged already,
Against our rights and lives.

Uther. Your rights and lives!

Vid. No marvel ye resist so stoutly now
The righteous judgment of these honest lords.
Ye were the movers of the plot whereof
The victims we, and these the instruments.
And but the love we bear his memory
In blind misconfidence so honoured you
Dissuaded it, we had ere now proclaimed
Your traitorous practising was known to us.

Uther. My lord! though we do hold that memory
That thou hast named, in as much reverence
As may by man be claimed of mortal man,
Yet hedge we not behind it; for we need not.
And be there in this presence dares to breathe
Against our open course or secret practice
That honest man or loyal needs to blush at,

We bid him to the proof, the mortal proof,
Be it of arms or stern inquest of law,
Openly, scornfully, defyingly,
We dare him to the proof.

A voice from the crowd (from one of two strangers apparelled as British chiefs, but muffled so as to conceal a full view of their faces)—

And well ye may—
And he were bold who took the challenge up.

Pered. Ha! fellow, who art thou?—and who hath privileged
Thy speech in such a place?

Stranger. My lord, thy greater
And more potential here.

Pered. And who is he?

Stranger. The British law. I am a freeborn Briton,
And claim me now my Briton's privilege.

Pered. And what is that?

Stranger. The privilege of speech,
Unshackled speech, to boldly make defence
For the accused where life hangs in the balance.

Vid. But is 't so, Guithelin?

Guith. My lord, it is,
So runs our Marcian law.

Vid. But 'tis too late,
She hath been judged already. Who dares say it
She was not fairly tried?

Stranger. Her questioning
Did leave unasked the mainest points of all—
And most unsolved what most did lack unravelling.

Vid. Indeed, Sir Oracle! Wilt please thee, then,
Of thy much wisdom to amend the error?
Stranger. I'll do my most thereto. Pray ye, Lords Cadwal
Or Kymbeline,—for ye are honest both,
And both were there—who companied the king
When last ye saw him living?
Kymb. The two princes,
His royal brothers there.
Stranger. Where left ye them?
Kymb. In the mid-forest, near the Druid's tomb.
Stranger. Where was 't appointed ye to meet the king?
Kymb. At the most northern outlet.
Stranger. Was 't the king
Himself appointed you to wait him there?
Kymb. No. 'Twas his brother, the prince Viden there.
Stranger. How long was 't ere the princes did rejoin you.
Kymb. I guess me some three hours.
Stranger. Went all together
In searching for the king?
Kymb. No. We divided us
In several bands.
Stranger. Which found the royal body?
Kymb. That did accompany the princes.
Stranger. Where?
Kymb. Fast by the Holy Well.
Stranger. As I remember me
The Holy Well neareth the southern outlet.
Who led your search that way?
Kymb. The princes led us.

Stranger. Straight to the spot, was't not?

Viden. Ha! villain—villain!

Stranger. Doubtless it chanced of some strange accident—

By tryste they sent you to the northern outlet,
And some high instinct which the gods did gift them
Led them to seek their brother at the southern!

Pered. Ha! villain! wouldst thou dare insinuate
That we were privy to our brother's death?

Stranger. We have no warrant that your brother's dead
Till we have seen him so. Touching his murder,
So be that he is dead, of that, my lords,
Your hearts alone can clear you or condemn you;
But if suspicion be determiner,
You see it squints! and while it looks two ways
To judge this lady to a guilty death
Upon so doubtful and two-languaged proof,
Were forcing law, were mocking equity,
Were murder manifest!

(*Cries of 'It were!' 'It were!' from the crowd.*)

Pered. (*starting up.*) Calumnious villain!
And these mis-mannered bawlers—out with them!

Guith. Nay, good my lords, methinks it much imports
The Druid and the body should be found,
Barring construction in so nice a matter.
Let them be sought for with what willing means
A nation's loyalty will furnish you,
And the meanwhile refrain we to adjudge
Until the blessed gods enlighten us
On this so strange event.

(VIDEN *whispers an officer in attendance on him. The two strangers observing this disappear suddenly.*)

Peredure. It needeth not,
There 's proof to overflow.

Vid. I think there is. And though our brother's blood
Appeals us for revenge, yet as we would not
This deed of justice looked our passion's act
I pray thee suffer it. Lord Bleduno,
This lady, meanwhile, is thy prisoner.
Entreat her well, but as thou 'lt answer it
Look she be surely kept. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Fifth.

AN APARTMENT IN THE PALACE.

(*Enter* VIDEN *and* PEREDURE *in conversation.*)

Pered. Oh, trust me, brother!
I ne'er took work on hand it liked me better.

Vid. I sent Kymar to apprehend that villain,
But both had fled. Methought the spokesman's voice
Sounded not new to me. But our chief danger
Is from the other two. They must be seized—
They 'll flee for danger or they 'll flee for help
To free our prisoner.

Pered. We 'll not give them time though.
But must she die, too, Viden? For a man,
A bearded man, I heed no more his slaying

Than I do slaying of the tuskèd boar
Or wolf I 'counter in my forest sport.
But for a woman—our born cousin, too—
I do not like this killing of a woman.
They 'll hoist us into rhymes and doleful ballads,
And howl them through the streets.

Vid. I have device
Lacketh but instrument therein, will save us
Reproach or reckoning. It makes herself
Her executioner, as from remorse
And after guilt confessed. But our need presses—
Swift to thy work. [*Exit* PEREDURE.

The work is butcher's work
So fits thy butcher's hand. But more I trust
To Kymar's brain than to thy brawn, good brother!
And shouldst thou chance thy death, as there 's some hope—
They 're stalwart tilters, and in desperate case—
It would less vex than vantage me.

We shall be quits,
My scornful cousin! now. For I will make thee
My safety-offering, my sin's substitute,
And then let Uther and Andragius
Work their will's worst on Peredure and welcome!
For Viden brotherless, Dunwallo's blood
Survives in him alone. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

Scene First.

THE PRISON IN CAERLEIR—AN ANTECHAMBER.

(*Enter* MODRED *disguised as one of the assistants of* BLEDUNO *the governor.*)

Modred. A crownèd monarch ; then a mendicant,
From brother princes begging royal alms ;
A holy Druid next ; and then a leech
Sporting with deadly drugs ; anon a lawyer
Without a patent or a fee ; and now
A jailer's deputy but one remove
Above the hangman's craft !—I 've passed already
Through many strange degrees. How many more
The blessed gods have destined me I know not ;
But this I know, though for the need I 've borrowed
A hateful office in a horrid place,
And chosen hour when all things holy sleep,
'Tis but to mask my doing of a deed,
Which, though it wear the mantle of the night,
May, with unfaltering voice, appeal the gods,

Call them for onlookers, and boldly bid them
To thrive it with their blessing.

I have drugged
The old man's sleep. This key unlocks her chamber—

(*Knocking heard without.*)

Ha! visitors at so untimeous hour!
Alas! this ruins all!

[*Exit, but immediately returns, following* VIDEN.

Vid. Sick and in bed, and thou his deputy!
How long hast thou been here?

Modred. But a brief time.
I have known better days.

Vid. Not much content then,
I dare presume with thy promotion, friend!

Modred. I bow my will to my necessity,
My need was desperate; this mine office fits
Broken and desperate man.

Vid. Unfortunate!
Came thy misfortunes from the gods, or be they
Wrongs done by man, that man might remedy?

Modred. I've known of both, but suffered most from neither.
I have myself been mine own enemy;
Shame, exile, beggary, I brook them all,
Due a misordered life.

Vid. (*aside.*) A homeless wretch,
Ruined and desperate!—the very instrument
I have been praying for!

Hast thou lost all?

Modred. Even to my very name. Till Bleduno

Made me his deputy, no home had I
But owns the badger and the fox—a cave.
Vid. To him restored that thou hast lost,—a home,
A country, means, and honourable place,
What wouldst thou for return?
Modred. My life to serve him
Were all too little to requite the man
Performed for me that more than miracle.
Vid. There is a service thou canst do for me,
And I will be that man.
Modred. What mighty service
May reach so rare a price?
Vid. How fares thy prisoner?
Is she not ill at ease? Thou know'st her crime—
The murder of our king.
Modred. Whose murderer,
Methinks, should be but ill at ease, indeed!
Vid. Touching her guiltiness there is no question.
In formal proof there lacks but her confession,
But that imports we have. And tho' in crimes
Of grain so gross our laws be peremptory,
Demanding public death; and she be doomed so—
She is a woman—our near kinswoman—
Hath royal blood—we 'd spare her and ourselves
The painful show of a so shameful death.
Wilt thou assist us to defend it?
Modred. Ay,
With my life's gage.
Vid. Then think thy fortune made.
Here is an earnest—(*giving money*)—count it nothing more—

A foretaste of to come. Look at this writing—
Art clerk enough to copy it?

(*Handing a scroll to* MODRED, *who examines its contents.*)

Modred. I said
I had known better days.

Vid. Go, copy 't, then,
And in thy proper hand, as thou hadst written,
That she did dictate thee. Make her subscribe to it
Unread.

Modred. If she refuse?

Vid. Compel her; threat
Thou 'lt use her person else, kill her thereafter,
And publish to the world she slew herself
Out of confessed remorse. When 'tis subscribed
Here is a phial, in her evening's drink
Empty it secretly. It will assure her
An easy exit. Then to Bleduno
Report she called thee, made thee pen this writing,
Subscribed it hastily, and then drank off
The cup which she had drugged.

Modred. Ere the sun rise
Thou shalt be rid of her. My hand for pledge to it.

Vid. Farewell, good fellow, then. Be prompt—be sure—
So shall be thy reward. [*Exit* VIDEN.

Modred (*solus*). Oh, matchless villain!
This second time suborned thine instrument
To do foul murder on a royal life!
'Be prompt—be sure.' Ay, by the blessed gods!
There 's need I should be both. This damned scroll
I 'll first show Gunegil, then hurry her

While night's kind mantle shroudeth our intent
Where Uther and Andragius wait for us. [*Exit.*

Scene Second.

THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE PRISON.

(*Enter* PEREDURE.)

Peredure. No message from Kymar—there's time for 't, then.
How fair she looked, how ravishingly fair,
Ay, on the very day she answered us
So haughtily to scorn! The flush of anger
Rose-dyed her cheek, but lent her beauty zest
To more provoke the pulse of appetite!
  But she must die. So wills my politic brother—
And die ere morn. What boots her beauty, then?
The glutton worms, do they observe virginity?
Or do they prize it o'er the foulest morsel
That staled wantonness doth bait them by?
Her virgin sweets must not go hansel worms!
  But ha! what 's here?—the prison's gate wide open—
At so late hour! Forsooth, a heedful watch,
When traitors are abroad. It cannot be
A second time Viden hath stolen a march on me!
Preventing me in this! In muffled guise
Some half hour since I spied him stealthily
Creep towards the prison's postern. By the gods,
An he 's forestalled me in my feast, he dies!
(*Enters hastily the prison with his sword drawn.*)

Scene Third.

INSIDE OF THE PRISON.

(*Enter* PEREDURE, *his sword drawn, followed by two or three of the prison attendants, partially dressed, as newly roused from bed.*)

Pered. She 's fled—escaped—her chamber's door wide open!
There 's treason here—villains, your neck shall answer it.
Who was it had the charge?

1st Jailer. Lord Bleduno,
Assisted by a stranger newly hired,
Idwal by name.

Pered. Where 's Bleduno?

1st Jailer. We found him in his chamber, dressed but sleeping;
So fast asleep we cannot yet awaken him.

Pered. Fetch him to me, I 'll wake him suddenly.

(BLEDUNO, *still half asleep, is brought forward, supported by the attendants.*)

Pered. Off with this mask of make-believe, old traitor!
Where is thy prisoner?

Bleduno. Prisoner?

Pered. Ay;
She hath escaped.

Bled. (*but half awake.*) The gods be praised for it!

Pered. Ha! praise the gods she 's gone—thy prisoner,
The princess?

Bled. Gone! then they have murdered her,
For she was innocent.

Pered. (*shaking him roughly, and raising his sword*),—
Ha! say'st thou, villain?

1*st Jailer.* Nay, good my lord, he is not full awake.

Bled. (*rubbing his eyes and gradually awaking*)—
Off, fellow! Where am I? My lord, the prince!
What means all this?

Pered. That thou 'rt a convict traitor;
Thy prisoner fled; the prison's gate wide open;
Her chamber empty; not a man on watch!

Bled. Ha! 'tis not possible. I but retired
A short half-hour to rest me in my chamber,
Leaving for deputy an honest fellow—
My keys (*searching for them*)—all gone! That villain,
Idwal, has them,
He stole them while I slept. After him, fellows!

Pered. Hold thou thy head in pawn until we find them.

[*Exit, followed by* BLEDUNO *and attendants.*

Scene Fourth.

OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF CAERLEIR— AN OPEN SPACE.

(*Enter hastily* MODRED *and another, both armed as British chiefs—their swords bloody,* MODRED *as urging the stranger to flight.*)

Modred. What man could do we 've done. Away, away!

Stranger. Lost, lost—all lost! Uther, Andragius, Gunegil,
Why should we live?

Mod. They are but prisoners,
And therefore we must live ; 'tis sickly courage
But lives i' the sunshine. Throw we our lives away,
We throw away their hopes. To die were coward ;
True courage now is chariness of life !
Think that their life depends upon our living.
Away, away ! [*Exeunt.*

Scene Fifth.

A FIELD NEAR THE PRECEDING.

(KYMAR *and* PEREDURE *lying upon the ground. Enter a party of Soldiers.*)

1*st Sold.* Lord Kymar slain, and the Prince Peredure !
Pered. Not slain. But oh, it was a giant smote—
This arm !—'Tis as a thunderbolt had shivered it.
I think they both be devils ! After them, after them.
1*st Sold.* What boot is there, my lord, an they be devils ?
We might as well hunt air.
2*d Sold.* Past doubt they 're devils ;
They fought like devils born. No more they heeded
Whacking with sword, and whizzing on with arrows,
Than minds mine old black drake a May-shower's slopping.
And as we entered here, methought they vanished,
Amidst a sort of kind of devilish odour,
And two loud thunder-claps. Didst thou not hear them ?
1*st Sold.* There was a noise indeed.
Pered. Lend me your help.

Kindly, good fellows, spare my wounded arm.
Poor Kymar! Bear him hence. The gods be praised,
We have the game was chiefly hunted for. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Sixth.

CAERLEIR—THE PALACE—AN APARTMENT.

(*Enter* VIDEN.)

Vid. 'I have known better days'—so said the fellow—
And in his voice, as in that rascal stranger's,
So shrewdly pled her cause—ha! now I think on 't,
They were the same. Dolt! not remember it,
When he was in my power! Now I 'm in his.

(*Enter a servant.*)

Servant. My lord, the Druid Modred prays some speech with thee.

Vid. The Druid Modred! Art thou sure 'tis he?

Servant. 'Tis he, my lord.

Vid. Go fetch him to my closet. [*Exit servant.*
This villain Druid, comes he to defy me?
Methinks somewhat foolhardily 'tis ventured,
To thrust his head into the lion's mouth,
And in the lion's den. He comes unwelcome;
His presence cumbers me. Something of moment
Brings him at such a time. What may it be!
If Kymar speed, they 're in my net were needed;
Andragius, Uther, Gunegil, now Modred;
And could they catch me but that rascal jailer—
But let me learn what brings my Druid hither. [*Exit.*

Scene Seventh.

THE SAME.—ANOTHER APARTMENT.

(MODRED, *in his Druid's dress;* PEREDURE, *his sword-arm bound up; and* VIDEN *walking angrily about.*)

Vid. 'Tis on the hour we fixed to meet the council.
Bethink thee, Druid, thou art in our mercy;
Produce it speedily.

Mod. Ye know my terms.

Pered. Refuse us, Druid, by the gods thou diest.

Mod. All die.

Pered. —In torture.

Mod. Some.

Pered. —In infamy.

Mod. Many the gods look down with love upon.
If there be in 't that is adjudged as murder,
We are the murderers, not Gunegil.
If death be due to gods or men for it,
We owe that debt, not she! I am no murderer,
So certifies that justicer within,
Pouches no partial fee, and tries as well
The judger as the judged; no murderer yet—
For that we did, it did but punish murder.
But to that lady's death be I consenting,
Nor hinder 't by what means a Druid may,
Who hath no power but prayer, no arms but arguments,
Nought may oppose your royal will, save will
Resolved as is your own, I am a murderer.

But take my terms—proclaim her innocent—
Acquit these lords—under your hand to th' world,
Be this full certified, then I produce it.
Refuse my terms, to find it will defy
Your and your kingdom's quest.

Vid. (*to* PEREDURE, *whom he takes aside*)—
This fellow, brother,
Methinks I construe him.
He 's one of those your nicer fanatics
Play casuist with the gods, must have their conscience
Coaxed with distinctions, but being satisfied
On ground how slight soe'er, will stick at nothing.
The breed is obstinate ; he may prove troublesome ;
Let 's seem to humour him.
(*To Modred*)—There is no mark
Betrays the mode of death ?

Modred. Lawyer or leech,
'Twill mock his scrutiny.

Vid. We take thy terms, then.
But when wilt thou produce it ?

Modred. Soon sóe'er
As ye produce that written testimony.

Vid. Will not our royal word content thee, Druid ?

Modred. Ye know my terms.

Vid. The council meets forthwith ;
Were 't possible thou couldst produce it then ?

Modred. It were. It shall be done. Be 't first produced
That vouching was agreed.

Vid. Then come with us,
And phrase it to thy liking. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Eighth.

THE COUNCIL HALL AS IN ACT III. SCENE THIRD.

(GUNEGIL, UTHER, *and* ANDRAGIUS *as prisoners, guarded; the two latter fettered.*)

Vid. When we accused this lady and these lords
Confederates in the murder of our brother,
There were did count it but a libeller's fable,
A monster fiction mocked the credible.
Be there who think so now that regicide
They 've followed with rebellion? When they dared us
To that produce they had so sure secreted,
Albeit seemed us thou didst require, Lord Guithelin,
A proof it needed not.—

Guith. I did but speak
The humble organ of our British law,
Which wisely rules to prove a murder done
There must be first produced that hath been murdered.

Vid. That proof we tender now. Call in the Druid.

(*The attendants bring in a bier, covered, followed by* MODRED.)

Lady! thou wouldst not deign to take our vouching.
Wilt please thee now, so thou dare look on it,
To satisfy thy wish.

(GUNEGIL *walks slowly to the bier*—MODRED *uncovers the face.*)

Guneg. Alas! alas!
'Tis he indeed.

O gentle Elidure! the heavenly smile
And holy calm goodness made native here,
Death's frosty finger hath but fixed to ice
And left unruffled still! If man did this
Let him despair of heaven!

(*Kneels beside the bier, covering her face. The people crowd round it exclaiming*)—

Our good king!
Alas! alas! our good King Elidure!

(GUITHELIN *and the other Council Lords next approach.*)

Guith. How fresh death sits on him! It doth but seem
As gentle sleep new fallen! Is it not strange,
If, as ye deem, his death were foully helped,
No sign of suffering or of violence
Is left imprinted here! It may be still
The doing of the gods. And, albeit circumstance
Invite suspicion, yet—

Vid. We do not rest it
Upon suspicion, Guithelin, but on certainty—
On the confession of his murderer.

Guith. Is there, my lord, who hath confessed to it?

Vid. As their confederate and their instrument—
He stands before thee now—the Druid Modred!

(*Expressions of astonishment from the Lords and bystanders.*)

Uther. Druid although he be, if he say so
He is a perjured villain.

Vid. When their rebellion,
Wherein the Druid was partaker with them,
Looked on the prosperous, ere the blessed gods
At cost of Kymar's loyal life had crushed it,

This traitor from his hiding-place came forth
And brought the royal body, purposing,
When she, this lady, he had fore-anointed
Should be in form your queen, to false accuse us,
My brother and myself, the murderers—
All this he hath confessed.

Kymb. If it be so;
If he hath this confessed—

Pered. '*If*,' Kymbeline!
Dost thou with *ifs* accept our royal word?

Vid. Be there who doubt it, we stand both prepared
To vouch it with our oath.

Uther. No doubt—no doubt;
Ye 'll vouch it with your oath—no doubt ye will;
It is but reason kin should comfort kin,
And sin the second, at necessity,
Be bail for sin the first. Oh, were this arm free!
Wert thou the instrument, accursed Druid,
To do this damned deed?

Modred. I was, Lord Uther.

(*Expressions of horror from the spectators.*)

Vid. Hear that, my lords! Doubt ye our vouching now?
He hath confessed it openly. Away with him!
Attach the murderer!

(*The Guards advance.* MODRED *waves them off authoritatively.*)

Modred. Back, slaves! and touch not
A servant of the gods. Did ye not hear—
Attach the murderer?

Guith. Art thou not he,
Druid, and self-confessed ?
Modred. The doer-drudge,
The instrument, the executioner,
The mere mechanic hand.
Guith. And these lords there
The will that wielded thee.
Modred. A lawyer, Guithelin,
And yet so green in logic and in law !
These are no murderers, they are too brave—
No traitors, they 're too honest.
Andrag. And this lady—
Druid, thou darest not charge—
Modred. He were a devil
Durst make that charge, and he could swallow it,
A fool, the devil's dupe.
Kymb. By all the gods, then—
Vid. Nay, Kymbeline, the villain doth but palter ;
He makes his mock at us. He hath confessed it—
Away with him !
Andrag. Druid ! the false accused
Thou hast absolved, but not declared the guilty.
Ere thou be hurried to that death thou owest,
I do adjure thee by the blessed gods,
Who tempted thee to this ?
Modred. When the rich merchant
Robbed, on the heath lies dead, who murdered him ?
Andrag. Methinks the robbers who divide his spoils.
Modred. Spoke like an oracle, Andragius !
And who divide the spoils of Elidure ?

Pered. (*rushing towards him with drawn sword*)—
Oh villain! villain! villain!

Kymb. (*interposing*). Nay, hold, my lord—this is no matter brooks
So prompt arbitrament. The Druid's charge
Hath mortal consequents to him or you;
There is a mystery lacks unravelling here;
A dark and damned one! We'll search it boldly,
And with our utmost we will render, trust us,
The living justice, and the dead revenge.

Vid. Were yonder clay with voice but visited
To testify for us! But since it may not,
Thereon for altar we will call to witness
The immortal gods who know us innocent.

(*They descend from their seats and kneel, one on each side of the bier, holding up their right hands.*)

Oh, that these lips might speak! as, from the shrine
Of some high oracle, voiced by the gods,
They would proclaim to all that we are—

A voice from the bier. Murderers!

(*The princes start from their knees, and stand rooted to the spot with horror, while* ELIDURE *rises from the bier.*)

Elid. Ay, murderers in all makes murderous act,
Essence, not accident! Ye willed the deed
And him defended ye from doing it,
Him would ye murder too! Ye bargained death
Though he but furnished sleep!

(*To the Guards, and pointing to* UTHER *and* ANDRAGIUS.)

Those rings of shame

From limbs whose worth may not be weighed with gold,
Pluck them, and place on these unnatural brothers—
Away! (VIDEN *and* PEREDURE *are removed, guarded.*)
(*To Gunegil.*) And thou, fair innocence! to-morrow
Shalt for a scaffold mount a royal throne.

Guneg. So soon, my lord?—so soon—so very soon!
I pray thee do not let it be so very soon.

Elid. Is it so still, alas? There is a reason,
This holy Druid is in haste to go,
And he it is this solemn rite must do.

Modred. It may not be. It is impossible.
There is a matter calls me o' the sudden,
I must away ere morn.

Elid. Then do it now.

Modred. Now—now? Fy, 'twere not fit—

Elid. Thou savedst my life,
And best it fits I should receive from thee
That which I prize above it. Be't done now,
And that in pomp there fails or ceremony
Shall be atoned in love.

Guneg. But till to-morrow,
If so it must, but till to-morrow, pray thee,
Be it delayed, my lord.

Elid. Then till to-morrow,
But from no hand, save thine, remember, Modred,
Will I accept my queen. [*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

Scene First.

THE PALACE GARDENS AT CAERLEIR—A LONG ALLEY OF YEW-TREES.

(*Enter* ELIDURE.)

Elidure. How strange a fate is mine! I wear a crown
Of me uncoveted that is not mine:
Whereof to ease me I have brothers flinch not
From foulest fratricide as means too costly;
While he that brother whose it is in right,
Rejects it scornfully, with will as desperate
Resolved to waive as they resolved to win it!
Brothers so bad, so base, so good, so generous,
Had brother ever on his bridal morn!
His bridal morn! How many a happy heart
Hath bounded to the name—and chid the sun
For his too tardy shine! Oh, it should rise
All lovely as herself—a day for beauty
To be remembered in the Kalendar!
But unto me cloudy and cold instead
It riseth dimly through a brother's tears

Shed for his brethren's shame! While she whose smile
Had changed the gloom to glory deepens it
By unresponded love! She weds me as
The patient martyr dedicate to death
Not as the willing bride!—(*looking out.*) Herself! abroad
At this so early hour!—these tear-shot eyes—
For very shame I dare not greet her with them;
I'll hide till they have passed.

[*Retires behind one of the yew-trees.*

(*Enter* GUNEGIL *and* BRENNA. *They stop in front of the tree behind which* ELIDURE *is concealed.* GUNEGIL *is in tears.*)

Brenna. Alas! dear lady
Is this the morning of a bridal day?
Be these the greetings that should usher it?
I've heard the blushes on the virgin cheek
Of a young bride were sweet, and joy did rainbow it
Athwart her very tears. Thy tears are bitter,
There is no joy in them. Methought less sad
Thou lookedst that day when thou hadst gazed thy last,
So seemed thee then, from out thy prison's casement
On yonder blessed sun.

Guneg. Oh that I had!
Would I had died that day!

Brenna. Thou dost not grieve
That the king lives?

Guneg. The gods forbid it, Brenna!
Yet horrid thoughts at times—and then that dream.

Brenna. Still brooding on that dream! What was it, pray thee?

Guneg. Methought the ritual of this day was doing,
And in its midway act. The multitude
Shouted their blessings on their new-crowned king;
The Druid, Modred, held my hand in act
To place it in the king's, while with the other
He raised the crown to plant it on my head;
When on the sudden, from the clefted earth,
A well-known form, the form of Artegal,
Upstarting with a look so stern on me
I cannot bid it from my memory,
Smote with his gauntlet, lifeless to the ground,
The Druid, then the king! I swooned for terror,
And when I woke methought the scene had changed,
And I was sitting in the Druid's cave,
Their murdered bodies lying at my feet!
Oh, it will make me mad! The blessed gods
Ofttimes do oracle their will in dreams.
In this I read the wrongs of Artegal—
The wrath of angry Heaven.

Brenna. 'Twas but, dear lady,
Thy fever's oracle,—thy waking thoughts
In wild disorder and dismembered fragments
Woven to scenes that sickness hued with horror.
The gods have oracled their will already:
The Druid's scroll—thou hast not lost it?

Guneg. No;
I read it oft; 'tis it gives strength to me
For this day's sacrifice.

(*Taking the scroll from her bosom and handing it to* BRENNA.)

Pray read it me
For the last time—I cannot for my tears.

Brenna (*reading the scroll aloud*)—

'The spirit on this earthly ball,
Erewhile was sinful Artegal,
In a new nature, and new name,
Transanimates another frame.
Blest in his change, do not deplore,
The lover thou shalt see no more!
His spirit, purged of self and pure,
Wills thee to wed with Elidure.'

Guneg. Be it so, Artegal; order your sacrifice,
The victim is prepared.

(*Exit sadly, followed by* BRENNA. ELIDURE *comes forward. After walking about for some time much agitated, he repeats to himself the concluding lines of the scroll.*)

Elid. 'Do not deplore,
The lover thou shalt see no more!
His spirit, purged of self and pure,
Wills thee to wed with Elidure.'

So then that five years' mystery is resolved—
This scroll unriddles all.
Resigns me first his crown; but that is nothing,
A bauble and a burthen! But the scroll!
In the long chronicles of mortal story,
What brother loved like this! Resigns me her
Above all price he prized—whose constancy
Outmarvels all that nursery faith believed,
Or maker fabled in a minstrel's tale!
But ha! her dream—

Meaning there may be there, perhaps monition
From the immortal gods.

(*Walks about for some time musingly.*)

Ay—so indeed,
Dared my poor virtue pitch a flight so high,
It were oraculous ; ay, so acquitting
Of that th' immeasurable debt I owe him,
The gods themselves should count them for my debtors.

[*Exit.*

(*Enter from the opposite end of the walk*, MODRED.)

Modred. Was 't not enough, I yielded to my worthier
Of earthly things, that thing I held the dearest ?
Must there be more than this ! must suicide
Be slowed with torture too ! Must I look on—
Nay, be a helper in't ?—myself, the hand
Performs the sacrifice ! I have not lost
The feeling and the faculty of man ;
Though I have lived in woods, I am not hardened
Into a forest stock. Albeit my fellowship
Hath been with birds and beasts, I am not grown
Like them, the slave and changeling of the hour !
Nor hath my fasting in my Druid's cave,
Or commerce with the gods, turned dust divine,
Or changed this fleshly to a spiritual !
'Twas easy, then, to yield her. I had lost
The race and relish of this living world ;
But I have since commerced with men in scenes,
Attune the soul to human sympathies,
Keen-edged by abstinence ; I've looked on her,
Listened to her, conversed with her, drank daily

Draughts of dissolving virtue! Ah, Modred, Modred,
Where is the Druid now? Amid his woods
In words magnanimous, but in the world
A weakling and a worldling, shrinking the ordeal
Himself prescribed, a woman!
(*Walking about as contending with his emotions.*)
On this head,
This all-unworthy head, the crown I forfeited
He self-disherited of his high state,
That crown would place of new! And can a Druid
Nothing shall match with this? Spirit of Archimail!
Live in me now! And ye, the gods, approve
A sacrifice whose worth but ye can measure it. [*Exit.*

Scene Second.

THE BRIDAL HALL IN THE PALACE.

(ELIDURE *and* GUNEGIL *seated on two chairs of state. Some steps below them* MODRED, *in his Druid's robes, on one side, and on the other,* GUITHELIN, *a table betwixt them, on which are placed two crowns.* ANDRAGIUS, UTHER, KYMBELINE, CADWAL, *and other lords form an open semicircle on either side. In the background, guards, and a numerous body of spectators.*)

Modred. The antecedents that old use prescribes
In due preparative, have now been done;
Remaineth but the last and holiest rite:
Lord Guithelin, is 't not so?

Guith. There is a custom
Was old observed in wedding of our kings,
Haply it may be passed.

Elidure. What is 't, Lord Guithelin?
We would not lightly pass whate'er our fathers
Have judged of moment in a rite so holy.

Guith. Before the Druid spake the mystic words
Made one the royal pair, he questioned them
Before the people touching their free consent
And mutual love, the which, unvouched by either,
The rite was counted void.

Modred. Nay, pass we it,
'Twas but an idle form.

Elid. Thy pardon, Druid,
It was no idle form. I read therein
The generous spirit of our British law,
Still jealous for the lieges' liberties,
Lest tyrant force or base cupidity
In them she owed a child's allegiance to
Should drive a maid against her free consent
To climb the kingly couch—thereby despoiling
A British virgin of a Briton's rights,
Dangering the honour of the marriage-bed;
And, in the royal home should show to all
A holy rule and happy precedent,
Sowing dissension and adulterous lust.
And though this lady sitteth by my side
Be fair to look upon,—so angel fair,
To gaze on her may put that even pulse
Ye Druids boast of to the temperance proof:

And albeit I have loved her many a year
With love as loyal and as obsequent
As e'er did knight his lady-love dismissed
To fight with dragons or to conquer giants,
To fetch her baubles from the Indian sea,
Or skin of leopard from the Afric sands
Ere he might lip her hand—by all the gods,
But she give freely answer to that question,
Our British use ordains for Britain's queen,
And do it frankly now before you all,
I rest a bachelor-king. Druid, proceed.

Modred. She gives consent to wed. From maiden lips
What wouldst thou more?

Elid. What would I more, Druid?
Shall I alone of all the British kings
Wed me a wife will not avouch her love,
To rich with scurril mirth the tavern jester
On my tame husbandry? breeding surmise
And foul conjecture in the popular mind?
It were unkingly done. So thou wilt not,
I 'll be myself the questioner. Fair cousin,
Dost thou not wed me with thy free consent?

Guneg. My lord, 'tis known of all I've given consent;
Needs farther questioning?

Elid. Follows thy love,
The hand is yielded me!

Guneg. Must I unbosom
Before all these the thoughts that inmost lodge
Within a woman's breast, which to herself
She scarcely owns, and in the owning feels

The blate blood coursing o'er her conscious cheek?
Must I do this?

Elid. Lady, I ask no more
Than British usage asks from Britain's queen;
Content with less becomes not Britain's king.

Modred. Be thou the current of an idle custom,
The first to bravely cross. The faithful heart
Dwells not on forward tongue. Lip-love is shallow;
The deep doth home it in the secret breast
Unvaunted and unvoiced.

Elid. Ye heard mine oath.
I may not pass from it.

Andrag. My lord, beseech thee
Look on that countenance where all may read
The gentle virtues have their home within,
Mirrored so fairly forth, honour and modesty,
Meekness and maiden truth. Dost thou spy aught
Warrants suspicion there? I 'll pledge my life—

Elid. She loves me! Wilt thou, Lord Andragius?
Methinks, then, 'twere not very grievous task,
She vouched it so herself!

Modred. My lord, my lord,
Thou dost o'erstrain thy right.

Elid. Druid, beware.

Uther. It is ungently done.

Elid. Thou too, Lord Uther,
Hast thou forgot thy loyalty?

Uther. Not to king Elidure. But 'tis not he
I have to deal with now.

Elid. With whom, then, pray thee?

Uther. The drug—that damned drug. The Druid's medicine
Is dealing with thee still.
Elid. Uther, it is;
I feel its working in my whole of man.
There was a virtue in 't, a gracious virtue—
I thank the Druid for 't.
Modred. No more of this,
I may not listen it. I pray thee lend me
Thy royal leave to go.
Elid. Thou stirr'st not, Druid,
Not for thy life.
Andrag. Most honoured lady,
Dost thou account Andragius of thy friends?
Guneg. Thou canst not question it. There liveth not
Hath proved himself a more.
Andrag. Then, dearest lady!
Since olden usage and the royal will
Ordain it so—though it seem harsh to thee—
Pray thee to yield to it. Thou givest consent,
Dost not, to wed the king?
Guneg. Ay, ay, Andragius.
Andrag. And with thy virgin hand thou tenderest him—
Guneg. A wife's obedience and fidelity.
Modred. Enough—enough.
Elid. Enough, didst thou say, Druid!
'Tis not enough. 'Tis but evasive art,
Reserved meaning wrapped in generals;
'Tis clear she loves another.
Uther. Nay, my lord,

Methinks the inference outruns the argument.
Lady ! thy heart owns it, or owned it other
More loved than this ? (*She is silent.*)

Elid. Uther, how think'st thou now ?
How squares the inference with the argument ?
Thou'rt a lack-logic lord.

Uther. Most honoured lady !
I do beseech thee, by the blessed gods,
Resolve us truly, dost thou love another ?

Guneg. I did.

Elid. I guessed it, lady !—and thy love—

Guneg. Is buried with him in his nameless grave,
Never to live again !

(MODRED *appears greatly agitated.*)

Elid. Confess me, Druid,
And ye incredulous lords, was there not cause
To put her to the shrift ? Name me thy lover.

Modred. My lord, my lord, this doth o'erpass thy privilege
As monarch or as man.

Elid. Doth it o'erpass
A husband's privilege, officious Druid ?
The name—the name.

Guneg. He hath no name ; he 's dead.

Elid. I 'll not believe me it. He lives, I doubt not,
To triumph in my shame.

Guneg. My lord, my lord,
Have I deserved all this ? There 's here will vouch thee
That he hath long been dead.

Elid. Who 'll vouch it so ?

Guneg. The holy Druid there.

Elid. The Druid—ha!
And was he privy to 't?
Modred. Oh, heed her not,
She speaks at venture. Fear hath turned her brain,
She knows not what she says.
Elid. I fear she does;
And so dost thou. Answer me honestly,
Or, by the gods, thy Druid's privilege
Defends thee not. Whom doth this lady love?
Modred. My lord the king!
Thou know'st somewhat of me. We have been partners
In scenes, it boots not where, did put to the proof
What is in me of man, be it to do
Or to endure. And be thou purposed on
Another trial and another proof
The gods' high will be done! But know thou this,
Not all the tortures which a king can will,
With all appliances he can command,
Shall trench the secret from a Druid's breast
That holy confidence hath buried there.
Elid. This vein avails thee not; for, by the gods,
I do suspect thyself. Ha! start'st thou, Druid?
Thou art the man! A thousand circumstances
Come o' the sudden, crowding strangely on me,
And turn suspicion proof. Her stealthy visit
That morning to thy cave, so near the day too
Was purposed we should wed; thy dropping down
So timely from the clouds to plead for her
Before the council lords; then playing jailer

For her deliverance ; thy taking state
Over these highborn lords, Andragius and Uther,
By placing thee upon the battle's head,
Where doffed the Druid and the man of peace,
Thou didst enact feats so foolhardy brave
As nought had dared, save love or ecstasy ;
Thy bearing now : Druid, thou art the man !

Andrag. But was it so, my lord ? Was he all this
Did he all this ! Was he that learned stranger
So timely pled for her ? Was 't he did warn
Lord Uther and myself, and saved our lives ?
Was he that jailer's deputy ? Was 't he
Did lead our battle like a gallant king ?
So many parts, and all so perfectly
And played by only one ! It is not possible —
Druid ! was 't thou ? (MODRED *is silent.*) Lady, was 't he ?

Guneg. It was.

Andrag. By all the gods, but it is passing strange !
How think'st thou, Uther ?

Uther. I 've heard me tell
Of fauns, of sylvans, and of satyrs haunt
In wood and wilderness, of necromance
And sorcerers with gloze of glamoury,
Abuse the sense with seeming, and at will
Put on what shape it needeth for the nonce :—
In verity I fear this Druid 's one
Of that black brotherhood.

Elid. Nay, Uther, nay,
There is nor sorcery nor magic in 't.
He is no charmer nor no conjuror

But simple traitor,—the false paramour
Of this false lady here. To the torture with him!

Guneg. My lord, my lord, wouldst thou out-sin, thy brothers,
And do an act so rank in tyranny
Their fellest deeds will show like mercy by 't?
'Tis past a doubt—wherein I cannot tell—
I have somehow displeased the blessed gods,
For now this second time have I been judged
For crimes whereof they knew me innocent.
I plead not for myself. I have outlived
All lends to life its savour. Take 't and with it
My thanks for taking it. But spare the Druid,
He saved thy life, he is an holy man;
His blood will cry unto the gods against thee—
For he is free of that thou chargest on him
As thou or any here.

Elid. Is it not he?

Guneg. Oh no, no, no!

Elid. On one condition, then,
He hath his life—but that refused, he dies!
Name me thy lover.

Modred. Lady, forbear, I charge thee.
'Twill mad him but the more. As for my life
Its last loved thread, oh he hath severed it,
And with a tyrant's stroke. It doth but burthen me;
I would not thank the hand did lengthen it
Not for a single hour.

Elid. (*to Guards*)—Away with him!

(*Guards advance to seize* MODRED.)

Guneg. Stay, stay, you bloody ministers! I'll tell
Your tyrant master all.

Modred. No, no, I charge thee;
I am content to die. Farewell!

Guneg. Shall I
Look on to see him murdered, perilled twice
His life to rescue mine? The righteous gods forbid it—
Tyrant! I loved thy brother.

Elid. Ha!

Guneg. Prince Artegal—
And ne'er shall love another.

Modred (*much agitated, in a reproachful tone*). Gunegil—
Gunegil! what hast thou said?

Guneg. (*starting*)— Ha! who spake there?
Whose voice was that?

Elid. Thou lovedst mine elder brother;
Were he yet living, wouldst thou wed with me?

Guneg. The immortal gods forbid! But he is dead.

Elid. How knowest thou that?

Guneg. The Druid, Modred, vouched it.

Elid. He vouched thee false, then. Artegal is living.

Guneg. My lord, this is unseasoned mockery,
And not befitteth thee.

Elid. It is no mockery,
For, by the gods, I swear my brother lives.

Guneg. No—no—Prince Artegal hath long been dead.
Druid! is it not so?

Modred. King Elidure,
This is not well. Thou hast broke faith with me.

Guneg. Oh, good my lord—king—cousin—Elidure—

For thou wert gentle once; as thou dost dread
The visitation of an orphan's curse
Is ever mighty with the pitying gods,
Thus on my knees—

Modred. Oh, heed him not, dear lady,
With all his sorrows and with all his sins
The banished Artegal hath long been dead.

Elid. True—he is dead, the banished and the erring;
He lives no more. But Artegal the good,
But Artegal the wise, the generous,
The best of brothers, and the best of kings
Our rightful lord, to bless thy love and ours,
Thanks to the gods! he lives. Kneel, chiefs of Britain,
Your homage to your king.

(*Advancing, kneels before* MODRED, *taking his hand and kissing it.*)

Long live King Artegal!

Guneg. Immortal gods!—(*swoons*).

Modred (*rushing forward with* BRENNA *to support her*).

Oh, thou hast killed her, brother!

Andrag. Brother!—he is thy brother, then!

Elid. He is,
Andragius—such a brother! Saved my life
While I usurped his throne. But that was nothing;
Had yielded to my love that priceless gem
He prized above his crown—above the world!
The master pleader perfect in the law,
The captain led our battle like a god,
The Druid filled the seat of Archimail,
And hath no peer for lore or sanctity,

He is my brother, and your rightful lord,—
Robe him as fits a king.

(*Divests himself of the regal mantle, with which, after* ANDRAGIUS *and* UTHER *have taken off his Druid's robes, false beard, etc., he invests* MODRED, *then places the crown on his head.*)

Guneg. (*recovering*). Brenna, am I awake? I had a dream—
A wild, a wonderful—

Elid. Lady, it was no dream;
'Twas but the reading of a former one:
Prince Artegal upstarting from the ground
Hath slain the Druid, and the king usurped
His kingly attributes—(*leading her to him*). His arms are open
To clasp thee for his bride. And if thou swoon in them
Lady, I ween it will not be for terror.

Guneg. But is it possible? And art thou Artegal?
Thou art—thou art—but where's the Druid Modred?

Artegal. Modred is dead, but lives in Artegal,
Oh, this o'erpayeth all!

(*Handing his regal crown to* ELIDURE.)

Take this, 'tis thine—
Thy merit won it, and thy people will it.
Wear it, dear Elidure, and honour it
T' a long life's end. Here is my royalty,
My queen, my crown, my kingdom, and my throne,
With her thou givest me all!

Guneg. Ay, noble Elidure,
Brook it and bless it long. O Artegal,

Let's to thy woods. We'll be so happy there!
Shall we not, Artegal?

Artegal. That could they witness it,
For very envy kings would turn to Druids,
I' the hope to equal it.

Elid. (*replacing the crown on the head of* ARTEGAL.)
Nay, brother Artegal,
Take back that's thine. I'll keep no stolen goods.
A crown so worn would make mine head to ache—
Besides, I have no queen. Come, loyal Britons,
Men of this isle of isles! who love your kings,
But will not brook them tyrants, shout with me
Long live our noble lord King Artegal!
Long live fair Gunegil, our honoured queen!

(*Shouts of* '*Long live* KING ARTEGAL!' '*Long live* QUEEN GUNEGIL!')

Artegal (*embracing* ELIDURE). O Elidure! thou art my better still;
My love must pale to thine!

Andrag. Ye noble pair
Whose souls are brothers! in our nation's story
Shall live your matchless love; and after-times,
When they would stir to some high strain of virtue,
Or show the triumphs of unselfish love,
Will speak of Artegal and Elidure,
And tell the story of the British Brothers!

THE END.

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